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50 YEARS OF WORLD REVOLUTION 1917 - 1967

An International Symposium

Edited, with an Introduction and Article, by

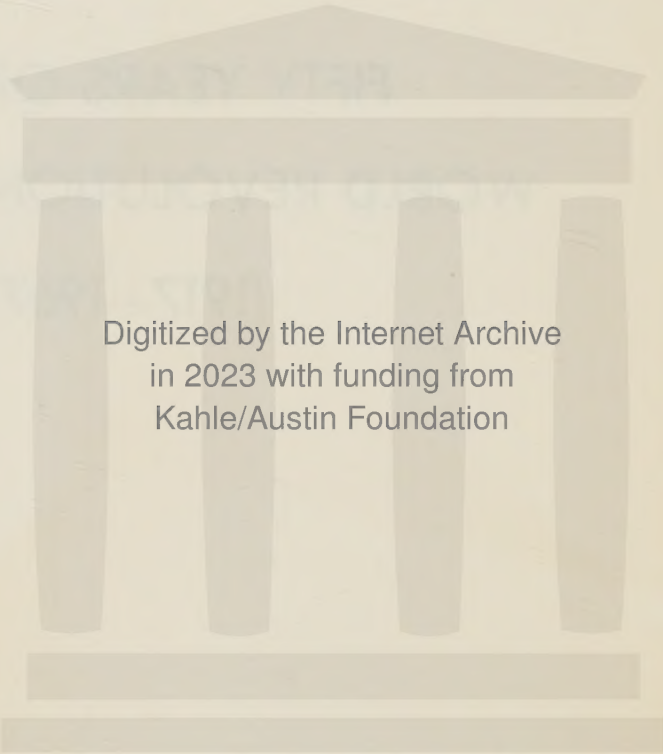
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FIFTY YEARS OF
WORLD REVOLUTION
(1917—1967)



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Edited and with an Introduction by

Ernest Mandel

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DEDICATION

To the combatants of October 1917 who stormed the Winter Palace and the Kremlin, who struggled in the Donetsk Basin and the Urals to transfer all power to the Soviets;

To Chapayev, to the Red Guards, to the partisans, to the ranks and commanders of the Red Army who, by defeating Kaledin and Kolchak, Wrangel and Denikin, the hetmen and foreign interventionists, saved the Soviet power;

To Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, to the Spartacists of January 1919, to the fighters of the Munich Commune, to the fighters against Kapp, to the Leuna workers of 1921 and all those who struggled for the triumph of the socialist revolution in Germany;

To the founders of the Republic of Councils in Hungary, to the victims of the White Terror in Hungary, Poland, Finland, the Baltic countries, and the Balkans, who planted the banner of communism in Eastern and Central Europe for the first time;

To the workers and peasants who fell during the Chinese Revolution from 1925 to 1927;

To Sacco, Vanzetti, and all the victims of capitalist class justice;

To the militant German workers who fell in direct combat with the Nazis, attempting to prevent Hitler from taking power;

To the heroic combatants of the Austrian Schutzbund who were the first to rise up, arms in hand, against fascist barbarism;

To Durutti and all the heroes of the Spanish Civil War who, in July 1936, halted and beat down the fascist uprising in all the big cities and were robbed of a virtually assured victory by a treacherous and inept leadership;

To the Bolshevik-Leninists executed by Stalin, to the Bolshevik Old Guard who were the victims of the purges from 1934 to 1938;

To Leon Sedov, Erwin Wolf, Rudolf Klement, Andrés Nin, and all the revolutionary militants assassinated beyond the

borders of the USSR on Stalin's orders;

To the heroes of the war of the Yugoslav partisans who organized the first successful uprising against fascism and were the first in the world to extend the victory of October 1917;

To the workers and peasants of the Red Army who, with indomitable courage, stopped and beat back the Nazi war machine before Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad and thus made possible, despite Stalin, the resurgence of the world revolution;

To the fighters in the workers' resistance against the Nazi occupation of Europe, to the heroes of the Warsaw ghetto, and especially those who, while fighting in the front line against German imperialism, did not accept any compromise with Anglo-American imperialism and their own bourgeoisies, such noted militants as Pantelis Pouliopoulos, Leon Lesoil, Henk Sneevliet, and the young leaders who emerged in the course of the struggle, such as Marcel Hic, Victor Widelin, and Abram Leon;

To the Chinese Trotskyists murdered by Chiang Kai-shek and to the Chinese communists fallen during the Long March, the partisan war against Japanese imperialism, and the victorious civil war against Chiang's regime, who liberated a quarter of mankind from the yoke of capital;

To the heroic partisans of south Korea, to the soldiers of the People's Republic of Korea, who gave a first setback to American imperialism;

To the revolutionary students, workers, and intellectuals who died in the October 1956 insurrection against Stalinist bureaucratism for a free and independent socialist democracy in Hungary;

To the heroes of the Vietnamese Revolution, from those of the 1930 uprising to Tha-Thu-Tau and his comrades to those of Dienbienphu, up to the dauntless fighters of the National Liberation Front and the People's Republic of Vietnam, who are so courageously confronting the most powerful war machine in the world and fighting for their unified and socialist homeland;

To those of Moncada, the Sierra Maestra, the victories over Batista and at Playa Girón, who made it possible to create the first workers' state in the Western Hemisphere;

To the Mau Mau warriors, to Patrice Lumumba, to the participants in the Algerian, Angolan, and Guinean maquis, who have fallen to unloose against imperialism and the indigenous possessing classes a process of permanent revolution in Africa;

To Malcolm X and all the others who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of black liberation in the United States;

To the hundreds of thousands slaughtered in the massacre of the Indonesian communists in 1965;

To all the unknown militants, workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, who have given their lives for the world socialist revolution;

And to the greatest among them, who symbolize our entire epoch:

LEON DAVIDOVICH TROTSKY, creator of the theory of the permanent revolution, organizer of the October insurrection, founder of the Red Army, the tireless fighter who strove to wrest the banner of communism from the bureaucratic usurpers, founder of the Fourth International, assassinated by an agent of Stalin;

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA, theoretician of guerrilla warfare, conqueror of Batista's army at Santa Clara, creator of socialist industry in Cuba, who chose to give up the exercise of power to organize new revolutionary combats abroad, assassinated by the hirelings of the dictator Barrientos;

We dedicate this work, confident that the youth of today and tomorrow will honor their memory by pursuing the revolutionary struggle with devotion, clarity, courage, perseverance, and intransigence, until exploitation and oppression, social inequality and violence among men will be definitively banished from this planet.

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INTRODUCTION

By Ernest Mandel

I

Revolution is an abrupt change in the social or political realm; it contrasts in this context with gradual change. The nineteenth century, in the historical sense of the term—extending from the Battle of Waterloo to the shot fired at Sarajevo—was the great century of gradual change. Despite the revolutions of 1848, the American Civil War, and the Paris Commune, most of the effective political forces were convinced of the virtues of gradualism and reform. They did not believe in revolution because they considered it purposeless—evolution would suffice to assure the triumph of progress. This faith in automatic progress predominated in the ideological sphere. In the organized workers' movement it was slowly to corrupt the revolutionary doctrine bequeathed by Marx and Engels.

In most of the European countries power came to the bourgeoisie via the evolutionary road, without a violent revolution comparable to the great English, French, and American revolutions. It was hoped that the transfer of power to the working class would be effected in the same way. What seemed an irresistibly mounting tide of social-democratic votes in almost all the industrialized countries appeared to corroborate this illusory notion.

The material basis of this naive faith in automatic progress was the uninterrupted expansion of the productive forces, the triumphant advance of big capitalist industry reaching out ceaselessly to new countries and new continents. There were, of course, economic crises. However, they were limited in scope and did not appear capable of halting the limitless expansion of capital. They sharpened social conflicts, but after a brief period of difficulties, the bourgeoisie discovered the advantages of social-welfare legislation in moderating these. From that point on, "social progress" and "economic progress" appeared to advance hand in hand. The somber frescoes of poverty painted by the novelists and the socialists seemed to belong to the past.

The cannon shots of August 1914 shook this facile optimism. We know today that they put an end to the century dominated

by faith in gradualism. Social catastrophes followed, one after the other. Scarcely ten years after the end of the first world war came the outbreak of the great depression in 1929. Then fascism came to power in Germany and cast a shadow of barbarism across the entire old continent. Six years later, humanity was plunged into a new world war, which culminated in the explosion of the first atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. From the Korean War to the first Vietnamese War, from the Algerian War to the second Vietnamese War, and from the Suez campaign to the Arab-Israeli "Six-Day War" in 1967, the world has scarcely known a moment of peace. From the cold war to the nuclear-armaments race and the "balance of terror," the human race has lived under the threat of atomic death. In face of this new world reality, the hope of a bright future of guaranteed rational progress, which inspired so many notable men in the nineteenth century, takes on the aspect of a macabre jest.

It would be wrong, however, to claim that the century of gradualist optimism has been succeeded by a century of decadent pessimism, whose latest by-product would then be the psychedelic wave. The capitalist mode of production accomplished its useful and necessary historic task. It provided humanity with the techniques and tools that make possible the satisfaction of the needs of all and render superfluous the division of society into classes. In the age of automation, only the ignorant or those of bad faith can dispute the fact that abundance is within the reach of all humanity. But in order to achieve this abundance for the benefit of all, it is necessary to bring about the conscious organization of production on a world scale, rational utilization of resources, planned management of the economy by the associated producers themselves, and the development of each individual's intellectual and creative capacities. Private ownership of the means of production, private appropriation of the social surplus product, autonomous—that is, anarchic—investment decisions, the fluctuations produced by the market economy, and the hierarchical structure of the factories and the economic system as a whole are insuperable obstacles in the path of rational organization of the economy and society. A social revolution is necessary to eliminate these obstacles to a sane society, obstacles to which not only a handful of extremely rich financial and industrial magnates cling but on which an entire highly developed social structure, spread over several social classes, is based—an establishment that, with the help of the mass media, tries to influence and

alienate from their own reality a sector of its own victims.

The profound social pessimism prevailing in circles under the influence of the big and petty bourgeoisie reflects only one side of the social reality of our century: the fierce resistance to the transformations demanded by history put up by those social classes which feel themselves condemned by this revolution. The other side of this reality is the confidence in their own strength, in their own destiny, and in their own historic mission periodically shown by the rising classes called upon to take over from a capitalism which has had its day. It is to their hopes, to their exploits and achievements that this book is dedicated. And since it seeks to comprehend the historical truth, it does not neglect their illusions, their temporary defeats, or their errors. Both the advances and the setbacks of the working class give the twentieth century its authentic depth and historic dimensions.

From the Russian Revolution to the Vietnamese Revolution, through the defeat of the Hungarian, German, Spanish, and French revolutions and the victory of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Cuban, and North Vietnamese revolutions, the century which began on August 4, 1914, indeed deserves the name that Isaac Deutscher and George Novack chose for their anthology of Trotsky's writings — *The Age of Permanent Revolution*. To the workers of Czarist Russia and to the Bolshevik Party belong the historic merit of having inaugurated these fifty years of world revolution with a clarion call whose echoes still resound today — the socialist revolution of October 1917.

II

Many historic factors, not a few remote influences, and various social forces acted in conjunction to make possible the first enduring conquest of power by the proletariat in a large country. The law of uneven and combined development made this country more vulnerable to revolutionary assaults than states where capitalism developed in an unfettered way. Czarist Russia was, of course, an economically underdeveloped country; political power was still exercised by an autocrat in the name of a landed aristocracy that was living off both the meager resources of the peasant masses and the state revenues. The economic power of this aristocracy, however, had already been irremediably undermined by the expansion of capitalist industry and finance capital.

Russian industry, which was partially in bondage to foreign

capital, developed later than that of Western Europe and at once assumed an unsurpassed degree of concentration. By the same token, the proletariat acquired an unequaled cohesion and combativity, heightened as much by this concentration as by the absence of democratic freedoms and by a standard of living far inferior to that of the industrialized capitalist countries. Caught between this young and vigorous proletariat, whose revolutionary aspirations it rightly feared, and the semi-feudal aristocracy with its massive, experienced repressive apparatus, the Russian bourgeoisie could not help but hesitate and equivocate. It confined itself to more and more moderate liberal proclamations. It sought to exploit the people's revolutionary ardor to gain a few miserable constitutional crumbs. And finally it fell head over heels into the camp of the counterrevolution.

This left the field largely open for the proletariat to win leadership within the revolutionary masses. It could only win leadership and hold it, however, on the condition that it assure the immense majority of the people satisfaction of their two most fervent aspirations: distribution of the land to the peasants and an immediate halt to the war. This required an end to the attempts at conciliation and class compromise personified by the moderate parties of the workers' movement, the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries. For this a transfer of power to a determined proletarian vanguard—the Bolshevik Party—was necessary in order to accomplish the revolutionary tasks, to assure the seizure of power by the soviets, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry. These are the objective historical causes which made possible the victory of October 1917.

Proletarian revolutions are distinguished from bourgeois revolutions in that they cannot be spontaneous products of the historical process. By the very nature of the socialist society they seek to usher in, they can only be products of conscious and organized action of the working class led by revolutionary parties. Attendant on the birth of the socialist revolution of October were not only objectively favorable socio-economic conditions in czarist Russia and internationally—the world war—which worked to sharpen all the contradictions in a country that had become the weakest link in the chain of international capitalism. There was also a slow maturation of social thought which came progressively to understand the most profound secrets of the evolution of societies and the laws governing their transformations. And this understanding moved

from a contemplative to an active state: that is, it came to comprehend the fact that only practice makes possible a definitive judgment of the soundness of a theory.

The Russian Revolution could not have been victorious without the penetration into Russia of French, Belgian, and German capital, the defeat in the war with Japan, the "dress rehearsal" of the 1905 revolution, and the world war—that is, without a worldwide imperialist system into which the old Slavic society was inescapably drawn. But it could not have triumphed either without the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach ("The philosophers have *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it"), without the *Communist Manifesto*, without the creation of the first workers' parties, of the First and Second internationals, and without the enormous self-confidence the modern proletariat acquired from being armed with a scientific theory continually confirmed by events.

It was the English Chartists, the French workers of June 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871, the German workers who waged a successful struggle against the *Sozialistengesetz* (anti-Socialist laws), who wrote the overture to the drama of the Russian Revolution. And in its powerful orchestration were mingled the themes developed by two thousand years of revolts of the oppressed, from the Roman slaves of Spartacus to the Gueux of the Netherlands and the Anabaptists under Thomas Münzer of the sixteenth-century revolutions. By the same token, the victorious Russian Revolution was also the first historic dividend of *Capital*, whose hundredth anniversary we have just celebrated.

These solid foundations of the theoretical structure still had to be complemented so that the specific features of the historic situation could be directly comprehended. Lenin was able to do this with his theory of organization, which codified the rules for building a party thoroughly imbued with a sense of the actuality of the revolution¹ and unequivocally oriented toward taking power at the head of the revolutionary proletarian masses. Trotsky also succeeded with his theory of permanent revolution which made clear the only form the seizure of power could take in Russia—in spite of the country's backward character and at the same time *as a function* of this underdevelopment—that is, the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry. Each of these two theories summed up a part of the historical experience accumulated by the international workers' movement and the revolutionary experience accumulated by the Russian proletariat subsequent

to the Revolution of 1905: one could not triumph without the other.

Without the theory of permanent revolution, the Bolshevik Party risked becoming a fist that would not strike at the decisive moment, or, worse still, would strike wide of the mark (experience tragically confirmed this in the nineteen-twenties in many countries both East and West). Without the organizational theory, the concept of permanent revolution would be condemned to remain largely a literary theory incapable of realization in the historical process. The fusion of these two theories was effected in the course of the Revolution of 1917. This entailed Trotsky's abandonment of his illusions about an ideologically loose party united with the Mensheviks. And it required Lenin's energetic reeducation through his April Theses of a Bolshevik Party so entrapped in the contradictions of the formula of "the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" that it even deduced from it conditional support for a coalition with the bourgeoisie. The victory of October testified to the advantages of this fusion.

These crucial theoretical contributions, which made possible the victory of the October Revolution, have long been considered by many to be applicable only to Russia and to deal only with the exceptional historical factors that made possible the victory of the revolution in that country at that precise moment. The special role of the war, the exceptional weight of the concentrated proletariat of Petrograd, the extraordinarily democratic conditions prevailing in Russia after the February Revolution, the extreme disintegration of the state apparatus, the exceptional experience acquired by the peasantry since 1905, the unusually servile character of the Russian bourgeoisie, and the exceptional errors which world imperialism made in regard to the revolution — have all been adduced to explain its victory.

To this day, the self-proclaimed "legitimate" heirs of the October Revolution, who command the state to which it gave birth, refuse to admit the general applicability of the theory of permanent revolution under whose aegis the victory of October 1917 in Russia was won. They continue to discover revolutions supposedly capable of winning under the banner of a "bloc of four classes," "progressive" states led by the "national bourgeoisie," or else countries setting out on a "non-capitalist" road under the leadership of forces neither ideologically nor socially representative of the proletariat. This incomprehension of the principal strategic lesson of the Russian

Revolution, above all since it has draped itself in the usurped banner of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, has thus contributed to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, to the defeat of the Spanish Revolution and to the more recent bloody revolutionary defeats in Iraq and Indonesia.

The same is true for the Leninist conception of the revolutionary party. Many have wanted to see in it a concept applicable only to the "special" conditions of clandestinity and the absence of mass organizations. In reality, this special environment at most facilitated the development of a theory whose universal validity emerges more clearly from each new experience of the international workers' movement. Paradoxically, it could be claimed today not unjustly that this conception is proving historically more valid—that is, more essential to the victory of the revolution—in the highly industrially advanced countries than in those countries where the weakness of the class enemy and the absence of potential political competitors can in exceptional cases make possible a revolutionary victory even without the incomparable instrument of a mass revolutionary Marxist party.

The construction of such a party is a long-range undertaking of unusual difficulty. In the theoretical sphere it requires cadres who combine the qualities of experts capable of confronting and combating the best bourgeois specialists in the major social sciences with the qualities of revolutionary proletarians impregnable to the temptations of corrupting careerism and selling-out which bourgeois society necessarily presents to all producers of above-average abilities. It requires the merger of these specialists with the natural leaders of the proletariat who develop through a process of moral, intellectual, and practical selection in the places of work, into a cadre totally devoted to the cause of the workers and the socialist revolution.

It requires, moreover, the continual testing by this cadre of a strategy and program embodied in an authentic plan of progressive mobilization of all working-class forces for the overthrow of capitalist rule and the seizure of power by the proletariat. Finally, it requires constant practical intervention by this cadre into everyday political life and the workers' struggles in order to win political leadership first within the vanguard and then, in the prerevolutionary phases, within the mass itself, preparatory to winning the majority of the working class in the actual course of the revolution.

The dialectics of the relationship between this revolutionary vanguard and the proletariat, dialectics of consciousness and

existence, of separation and unity, of deliberate initiatives and the release of spontaneous combativity, is exceptionally complex in theory; its practical application is yet far more difficult. But there is no other way to carry through this most difficult revolution in human history, the conquest of power by a class which never held any of the levers of economic or financial predominance before taking power, contrary to all classes which won political power before it. This is the principal lesson of the victory of October 1917. And it remains the principal lesson of the temporary defeats of the socialist revolution in the industrially advanced countries.

III

The Bolsheviks did not win power in October 1917 with the aim of undertaking the construction of a socialist society in backward Russia isolated from the rest of the world. In their minds the October victory had no meaning except as a prelude to the world socialist revolution. All socialist observers abroad also saw this undertaking in that light: some—the social-democrats and centrists—condemned it as utopian and unrealistic because no foreign revolution would come to the rescue; others—Communists and other forces of the far left—responded to the appeal sent out by Soviet Russia and tried to assure the linkup of the Russian Revolution with the world revolution. It was with this aim that the Communist International was founded. For several decades, thousands and thousands of workers, students, intellectuals, and professional revolutionaries devoted themselves to this task body and soul, scorning all dangers and sacrificing their lives.

In this book the vicissitudes of this endeavor are described in detail. It is difficult today, after a half-century of the most diverse revolutionary struggles on nearly all continents, to claim that the Bolsheviks misunderstood the "spirit of the times" and that the idea of world revolution was a delusion. Paradoxically, those who then accused the Bolsheviks of an excess of "voluntarism" and asserted without qualification that objective conditions alone could decide the outbreak and victory of revolutions are today obliged in their turn to attribute a completely excessive influence to the Bolsheviks' "agitation" and the "revolutionary will" of a vanguard. This is because they must rely on this factor alone for an explanation of the outbreak of successive revolutions in Germany, Austria, Hungary, China, Spain, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Indonesia, a second time in China, Vietnam, Korea, Bolivia, Algeria,

a second time in Vietnam, Cuba, Santo Domingo, and so on. Theirs is clearly not a serious attitude; it smacks of mythology and demonology and exhibits not the slightest trace of a scientific, materialist interpretation of history.

If there have been such intense revolutionary struggles in so many different countries, drawing so many millions of workers and peasants into the fight against capitalist rule, it is clearly because the period opened by the first world war has indeed been the epoch of the world socialist revolution, the epoch of the death agony of capitalism; and in this period the revolutionary transfer of power from one class to another began on a world scale. That, after twenty years of defeats for the world revolution, the isolation of the Russian Revolution has been broken and a new series of revolutionary victories has finally torn away from capitalist exploitation a third of the globe and of the human race can only confirm the soundness of the historical diagnosis made in 1917 by Lenin, Trotsky, and their companions.

No ruling class, however, exits from the historical scene without stubbornly defending its threatened social power with every means at its disposal. And what was true for social classes as morally and politically decayed as the slaveholders of the third and fourth century A. D., or the feudal nobility of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, is obviously still more so for the industrial and financial bourgeoisie of the twentieth century, which has accumulated in its hands an economic, military, and ideological power incomparably more extensive and centralized than all the possessing classes of the past.

To hold onto its power and contain or roll back the successive revolutionary onslaughts, the imperialist bourgeoisie has resorted to three basic methods.

When its power is directly threatened in the central capitalist countries and economic conditions do not permit quieting the workers by social reforms, it resorts to white terror, mass murder, to the organization of civil war, and to the institutionalization of terror called military or fascist dictatorship. Let us not forget either that it was this class and not the Bolsheviks who unleashed the civil war and the white terror in Russia. The bloody repression of the Spartacists in Germany; the establishment of dictatorial governments in practically every country in Eastern Europe; the coming of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany; the Franco putsch in Spain; and, more recently, the military putsch in Greece and the Onganía dictatorship in Argentina (Argentina is a special case intermediate between the industrialized capitalist countries and capi-

talist countries with a semicolonial economic structure) all bear witness to the same tendency.

When capitalist rule is threatened in the semicolonial or colonial countries by the revolt of the masses fighting for their national and social liberation, and when the social forces allied to imperialism within these societies are incapable of stemming the revolutionary tide, capitalism resorts to colonial wars and foreign military interventions in an effort to prevent the loss of one more country to its worldwide system. Examples are the French and Spanish war against the Kabyles of the Rû, the Japanese war against the Chinese people, the Dutch "police action" in Indonesia, the first Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Algerian War, the Suez War, the second Vietnamese War, the U.S. Marine landing in Santo Domingo, the attempts to invade Cuba, the counterinsurgency forces in Latin America, the civil war unleashed in Yemen — the list is already long and it is far from complete. It would certainly not be contrary to the dialectical logic of the victors of October if this half-century were rechristened the epoch of wars, revolutions, and counter-revolutions, since revolutions cannot fail to be accompanied by counterrevolutions.

But there is a third category of counterrevolutionary techniques employed by the imperialist bourgeoisie since its rule has been directly threatened. While the futility of dictatorships and colonial wars is evident today to a growing number of historians and ideologues of the bourgeoisie itself, these bourgeois ideologists cling all the more tenaciously to the techniques in the economic sphere which derive from Keynesianism and whose most successful political prototype still remains the Roosevelt experience in the United States.

These techniques amount to an attempt to disarm permanently the class struggle in the imperialist countries by integrating the workers' movement into the bourgeois state, progressively undermining the workers' class consciousness, causing them to lose their sense of identity and totally atomizing them in an all-embracing "mass consumption society." This attempt began in the United States but it has already been applied more widely in Western Europe and Australia for roughly fifteen years now, and its export to Japan is only a matter of time. This undertaking can be labeled "neocapitalism," without however giving this term any meaning other than that of distinguishing a specific phase of monopoly capitalism.

What strikes one most of all in examining the historical perspectives of this more subtle (and apparently more success-

ful) attempt to halt the progress of the world revolution is the limited geographical area to which it can be applied. In order permanently to integrate the workers' movement and the majority of the workers into a society of the neocapitalist type, the requisite minimum is an already attained level of industrialization and aggregate wealth, as well as a steady rhythm of expansion (that is, relative autonomy with respect to price fluctuations on the world market) of a level that would exclude three-quarters of the countries of the world from all chance of success in such experiments. At most, these can find a momentary success in about twenty countries (the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Western Europe), which account for less than 20 per cent of the world's population. This is doubtless the main reason that, from the historical standpoint, the attempt to stem the revolutionary tide has already failed.

The temporary halting of the revolutionary wave in Western Europe—owing especially to the loss of the revolutionary opportunities in the aftermath of the second world war through the betrayals of the reformist and Stalinist leaderships—has for two decades shifted the revolutionary center of gravity toward the colonial and semicolonial countries. But from there it is rebounding more and more clearly against the imperialist countries themselves.

The *sine qua non* for neocapitalism's relative stability is constant, rapid, economic expansion, making it possible to maintain both a high level of employment and a high rate of increase in productivity. In these conditions, and in these conditions only, real wages can increase regularly without threatening the rate of profit.

The concurrence of a period of reconstruction following the second world war, of a profound and protracted technological revolution, and an unbridled arms race did, in fact, create the objective possibility in the fifties and sixties of such a relative stability. The expansion seemed self-generating and itself the principal source of further expansion. The trade of the imperialist countries among themselves, their national incomes, and their industrial product underwent a sensational and unprecedented boom in countries like Japan, Italy, and West Germany, and a notable rise in France, in the small Western European countries, in Canada, and in the United States (except under the Republican administration). Monopoly capitalism seemed to have resolved all its explosive social problems and all its economic contradictions. Such was the conviction not

only of the system's apologists but even of some of its fiercest critics.²

Nonetheless, a deeper analysis made it possible to perceive the fissures in the system, which were fundamentally only a modified counterpart of the basic contradictions revealed by Karx Marx. In spite of the unexampled boom in production and income, productive capacity continued to grow more rapidly than the purchasing power of the "final consumers." As a result of the application of various economic techniques (by the big monopolies as well as by the bourgeois state), this gap did not take the form so much of a periodic appearance of masses of unsalable commodities but of a slow but constant expansion of surplus productive capacity. From the standpoint of economic rationality, the waste was the same. From the viewpoint of economic growth the effects were different, but they were to reveal themselves sooner or later in pronounced fluctuations in industrial investment. This stage was reached in the United States in the fifties, in Western Europe after the mid-sixties.

This long period of expansion (although interrupted by more or less frequent recessions depending on the country) was sustained by a colossal expansion in military expenditures, which were sustained in their turn by a no less colossal pyramid of public and private debt—private debt in the United States went from 140 billion dollars in 1945 to 965 billion in 1966, from 78 per cent of annual private production to more than 175 per cent of it. In 1951, the average American paid out 14 per cent of his income on his debts; now he pays out about 25 per cent. And, as the Republican era in the United States and the 1964-67 period in France showed, any attempt to return even temporarily to "financial and budgetary orthodoxy" would immediately stifle expansion. The real dilemma confronting neocapitalism is a choice between inflation and stagnation. The inflation in the United States is undermining the dollar's function as an international reserve currency, thereby shaking the whole international money system; it threatens in the long run to provoke an extremely acute financial crisis which would have profound repercussions on international trade.

Any temporary "welfare state" success in the form of prolonged full employment inevitably modifies the relationship of forces on the labor market between capital and labor and thereby creates conflicts over the division of the national income which the capitalists finally come to consider intolerable. Insofar as

international competition sharpens, any jump in wages and unit costs in any imperialist country in reality threatens the positions of that imperialism on the world market. It is therefore inevitable that the bourgeoisie will abandon the doctrine of full employment to which it declared its devotion only when the danger of a political crisis for its regime loomed immediately ahead. In this already slowed phase of neocapitalist expansion the normal reaction of the employers has been to re-create periodically or on a permanent basis an "industrial reserve army," which it utilizes to depress the rate of wage increases, and to absorb the unions into the bourgeois state, thereby imposing on them an "income policy" which deprives them of the opportunity to take advantage of conditions favorable for improving labor's share of the national income. Thus appears a second factor, in addition to that of inflation which tends to undermine the constant increase in consumer income—the basis for any long-term economic expansion. In this way, the incentives for working-class rebellion multiply and, under the effects of the conflicts and contradictions which the neocapitalist reality itself engenders, the myth of a "society of consumption" without economic problems and class struggles is being progressively dispelled.³

This myth fades all the more quickly because a key area of economic life—the internal life of the enterprise—has never been the scene of any sort of "social détente." Neocapitalism infallibly includes an attempt to "integrate" the working class into the regime through high wages and social-welfare legislation, making it partially immune to the most glaring uncertainties of the proletarian condition.⁴ However, it has never included any modification in the hierarchical structure of the enterprise, where the power of capital to command labor is and has remained an absolute power. Above all, in periods of full employment, the working class has shown an increasing tendency to challenge this power of command; therefore, propaganda and action around the slogan of "Workers' Control" take on a growing importance. And when full employment breaks down, when structural crises abruptly strike whole branches of industry (coal, textiles, steel) or whole regions (in capitalist Europe: Wallonia, Scotland, the Ruhr, North-eastern France), capital's power to determine the use of machines and labor is disputed by the proletariat not only at the plant level but also at the level of the economy as a whole.

Since the third industrial revolution, which is under the aegis of automation, necessarily entails such a breakdown in full

employment, despite the neocapitalist techniques, the danger of a lasting demobilization of the working class in the imperialist countries is much reduced. How broad its mobilization is to be, however, and above all its transformation into an overall challenge to the capitalist regime and the bourgeois state, depends—more than in the past of hunger and poverty—on the role of the subjective factor, that is, on the capacity of Marxists to construct a real revolutionary *party* commanding the allegiance of an important minority of the proletariat.

Socialist revolution in the West therefore is not a utopian prospect. But, it can only recur as a real possibility at specific moments of great mass upsurge by the working masses (Germany in 1923, France and Spain in 1936, Italy in 1948, Belgium in 1960-61, Greece in 1964-65, leaving aside the revolutionary crises directly produced by the war). And it can only triumph if there exists at that moment an alternative leadership in the workers' movement which is determined and able to lead that movement to the seizure of power and the overthrow of the rule of capital.

IV

Broad masses cannot live for long periods under constant tension, maintaining an extraordinarily high level of political activity after the day's work they still must put in in order to make their living. The laws of history, of psychology, and even of neurophysiology, therefore entail a certain periodicity in revolutionary struggles: every flux is inevitably followed by a reflux.

Of course, no determinist theory can directly deduce from the extent and duration of a revolutionary upsurge the extent and duration of the reflux in mass activity which threatens to follow it. Numerous factors influence this alternation, in particular the capacity of the ruling class to stabilize the economic, social, and political situation—however little—after a momentary revolutionary defeat. When this capacity is virtually nil, the revival of the mass struggle will obviously be more rapid than when it is still considerable. That is why the mass movement experiences much more rapid revivals in the colonial countries after periodic reverses than in the imperialist countries.

In the Soviet Union also, the working class began to reduce its political activity in the wake of the extreme strain which enabled it to triumph in October 1917 and in the civil war. The causes for this reflux were manifold: a change in the social

composition of the working class itself (elements freshly emerged from the peasantry replaced a vanguard decimated by revolutionary struggles); physical and nervous fatigue; the pressure of privations which in turn resulted in people giving primacy to satisfying immediate, purely material needs; disillusionment owing to the setbacks of the world revolution; a more and more constricted field of political activity as a result of the dismantling of Soviet democracy; the pressure of unemployment which made political activity entail the danger of loss of employment; etc., etc.

All these factors could have been gradually neutralized by a correct party and state policy; this was the deeper meaning of all the proposals made by the Left Opposition, which presented a real alternative governmental program to that put into effect by Stalin—which he carried out first in association with the “Old Bolsheviks,” then in alliance with Bukharin, then with his own faction alone, and, finally after the terrible *Yezhovshchina*,* as the unchallenged bonapartist head of the bureaucracy on the ruins of an almost completely destroyed Bolshevik Party. However, the experienced party cadres, who had been able to make the revolution, proved incapable of understanding in time the danger threatening them. Instead of serving as the principal brake on the growing bureaucratization of the state, which Lenin tried to combat at the end of his life, they became the motive force of this bureaucratization. When they finally understood the extent of this evil it was already too late. The bureaucracy had seized state power; the proletariat was already politically expropriated.

Simplistic minds who have assimilated only a mechanistic and vulgarized version of Marxism suppose that all revolutions and counterrevolutions mean the passage of power from one social class to another. The historical reality, however, is more complex. Neither the advent of absolute monarchy nor the French revolutions of 1830 and 1848 were social revolutions. In all of these revolutions, power passed from one faction to another of the same ruling class: in the case of absolute monarchy, from the nobility of the manors to the court nobility; in the case of the nineteenth-century French revolutions, from the landowning bourgeoisie to the financial bourgeoisie and from the financial bourgeoisie to the industrial bourgeoisie. Marxism thus also encompasses the concept of *political* revolutions and counterrevolutions which do not alter the basic mode of production. Even the restoration of Louis XVIII was,

*The period of N. Yezhov's incumbency as head of the GPU during which the frame-up trials and purges reached their greatest fury.

in short, a political and not a social counterrevolution, since, while the nobility received financial compensation, it did not recover any of the class privileges it had enjoyed under the *ancien régime*. It was in no way reestablished as a ruling class.

The view that Stalin's victory represented a social counter-revolution bringing with it the advent of a new social class—either a "capitalist" or a "bureaucratic" class⁵—does not stand up under an objective analysis of either the Soviet mode of production or the position of the USSR in the world class struggle. The Soviet economy is not evolving in accordance with the capitalist laws of development. No one has yet been able to discover any "laws" which would express the inner logic of a "bureaucratic society." The contradictions in the Soviet economy are those of any society in transition from capitalism to socialism, except that they have been reinforced by bureaucratic degeneration.

The ties between the Soviet Union and the world workers' movement have not been broken. The parties attached to the Soviet bureaucracy function within the working class of their countries. However bureaucratized they may be, the special ties they maintain with the USSR do not integrate them more in the bourgeois state than the social-democratic workers. Instead, these ties enable them periodically to act in a more anti-imperialist manner than the social-democrats. And, on occasion, this has made it possible for them even to lead objectively revolutionary movements, as they did in Yugoslavia, Korea, China, and Vietnam. To consider these parties as the expression not of bureaucracies within the working class but as an another social class flies in the face of a whole series of basic Marxist postulates.⁶ This also leads to the most complete political incoherence in determining what position to take in regard to such crucial historical events as the Chinese Revolution or the current Vietnam War.

After the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, few would dare argue that the Soviet Union is not burdened with bureaucratic deformations which have assumed the amplitude of outright degeneration. Attempting to explain Stalin's crimes or the manifold nonsocialist aspects of the Soviet reality as the result of simple "errors," or of a "cult of personality," is alien to Marxism, that is, to a scientific explanation of socially significant phenomena. For a Marxist, manifestations of the scope of the *Yezhovshchina* or the forced-labor camps and the fact that every victorious socialist revolution since 1917 has won victory only by breaking with the directives or the "counsels" of the Kremlin and its local representatives cannot be a mere

accident. They can only be explained by the existence of social interests contradictory to those of the proletariat and the world revolution. And these are the interests of a bureaucracy enjoying considerable material privileges within Soviet society, which has an essentially conservative attitude toward any change in the *status quo*, both in the world at large as well as inside the "socialist camp" or in the USSR itself.⁷

However distressing the appearance of this bureaucratic degeneration in a workers' state in transition from capitalism to socialism may be to revolutionary Marxists,⁸ it is not in itself difficult to explain. The emergence of an equalitarian society which would assure the full development of all individuals obviously requires a very high level of development of the productive forces. The withering away of the division of society into different classes and of the state requires a general absence of social tension. And for this the same social base is required: a very high level of social wealth. Without this, Marx said, all the "old crap" will inevitably come back.

In accordance with this prediction, the Bolsheviks thought that their revolution would either open the way for world revolution or disappear. For twenty-five years neither happened. The revolution remained isolated in a backward country, but capitalism was not restored in the USSR. Essentially, the founders of the Soviet state underestimated the extraordinary vitality of a mode of production superior to that of capitalism, as well as the gravity of the historical crisis that had seized the world capitalist system in an inescapable grip. These two factors explain the survival of the conquests of October despite the revolution's temporary isolation and the low level of development of the productive forces in the USSR. But at the same time bureaucratic degeneration was the price of survival in these materially and socially unfavorable conditions.

Today, the economic, social, and political bases of this degeneration are vanishing before our eyes. Russia is no longer a backward country, but is from the standpoint of total production the world's second-ranking industrial power, and the fourth or fifth from the standpoint of average industrial labor productivity. The proletariat is no longer a small minority of society; it is the principal social force in the country. The reflux of the world revolution has given way to a new revolutionary upsurge which has definitively broken the imperialist encirclement of the USSR and the October Revolution's historic isolation. The conditions therefore are ripe not only for the consummation of the socialist endeavor begun by the October Revolution but for the flourishing of socialist democracy on

a level unknown in the past, which would once and for all expose the profoundly despotic character of the pseudodemocracy of bourgeois parliamentarianism.⁹

But the onset of objective conditions favoring the disappearance of bureaucratic power in the USSR and its replacement by a democratic Soviet government is one thing, the actual realization of this possibility is another. To believe that a more or less automatic democratization of the government in the USSR will ensue from the moment that the conditions for this transformation are mature is a singular underestimation of the resistance of privileged social layers whose advantages depend precisely on the exercise of power. The Khrushchev era created illusions in many observers that the bureaucracy would reform itself, that there would be a kind of "political revolution from above." Today, the most sincere of these have to sing a different tune, for the balance sheet of these reforms is at once meager and eloquent. The bureaucracy introduced them to maintain its power and privileges, not to abolish them. And it is this purpose which sets their limits. For progress beyond this, action from below is needed. The gradual waning of the illusions created by the "liberalization" is clearing the way for such action.

Incurable apologists are again raising the question of the possibility that such oppositionist activity by the masses could "weaken" the USSR. This is the eternal argument of last resort of trade-union bureaucrats confronted with criticism from the rank and file: "You're taking a chance of weakening the union and strengthening the boss." As if the historic record of the bureaucracies has not been replete with actions bringing their organizations to the brink of ruin! All the hypocrisy of this argument is glaringly exposed once it is noted that what the various opposition elements are calling for today are rights which were considered self-evident in Lenin's time. Is the Soviet state then less stable today than forty-five years ago? This hypocrisy becomes truly odious when it emanates from leaders who reserve their avenging thunderbolts for a few nonconformist writers and students, while exhibiting scandalous passivity and cowardice in regard to the imperialist aggression against Vietnam. Some illegal journals or novels¹⁰ allegedly threaten an actual reintroduction of capitalism into the USSR, while three years of daily bombings of North Vietnam do no damage worthy of note to the integrity of the "socialist camp" or to the military and political power of the workers' states!

To understand the basis of this problem, too much time should not be lost on the sophisms of courtiers. The reality

must be confronted face to face. And this reality is not solely 100 million tons of steel and a remarkable advance in production, culture, and science in the most varied fields.¹¹ Part of this reality is also the crucial fact that the Workers' Inspection created by Lenin in 1918 is weaker today than it was fifty years ago, has infinitely less power than in the Leninist period, and has an even smaller staff than it had in Stalin's time!¹² The reality is that, on the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, Soviet society continues to exhibit all the stigmata of the burning shame of the Moscow Trials and the *Yezhovshchina*, that it has still not rehabilitated the main organizers and leaders of the October Revolution and does not dare mention their names in the celebration of this anniversary! No wonder that a scholar like Peter Kapitza, the foremost nuclear physicist in the USSR, felt compelled to make a passionate plea for a free confrontation of ideas in all fields, including the political field, and that he declared: "The young must learn the art of polemics from their grandfathers who made the revolution!"¹³

In the blackest period of Stalinism, many left intellectuals in the West became fascinated with their dread of the bureaucracy and condemned themselves to complete pessimism. This fear produced in them the most somber view of the future. Was humanity to free itself from capitalism only to experience the totalitarian nightmare of 1984 suggested by George Orwell? Today we already see clearly the reasons why such an apocalyptic perspective can be rejected. The resurgence of the world revolution has also released revolutionary forces in the Soviet Union. The mercilessly self-critical nature of proletarian revolutions, which Marx predicted¹⁴ but which was repressed for a time by Stalin, has reasserted itself.

The danger of bureaucratic deformation and degeneration of a successful socialist revolution which fifteen years ago was vehemently denied by the whole official Communist movement is generally acknowledged today. Even chiefs of state like Tito, Fidel Castro, or Mao Tse-tung admitted and propose different remedies for it, the validity of which I shall not go into here.¹⁵ However, the revolution's advances are gradually proving the correctness of the conviction that in historic perspective bureaucratic degeneration will appear as a temporary detour. Socialism will triumph definitively in its purest and most salutary aspect, that is, as the most direct, all-encompassing democracy for the mass of producers. And this entails the rejection once and for all of any doctrine of a single party claiming sole possession of eternal, absolute truth.

V

More than ever, revolutionary socialism is the only possible answer to the most urgent problems of our time. As long as private ownership of the major means of production exists, it will prove impossible to accelerate the economic growth of the underdeveloped countries suitably. And the world's division into "rich" and "poor" countries will be accentuated. As long as the industrialized countries remain capitalist, they will prove less and less capable of channeling the enormous productive power resulting from the third industrial revolution into increasing the well-being of the human race. Pushed to its absurd conclusions in conditions of semi-abundance, the market economy is avenging itself on those who want to impose its survival at any cost by enormously accentuating the irrationality of the entire economic system.¹⁶ The failure encountered up to now in organizing society scientifically becomes all the more glaring in view of the spectacular successes in industrial and agricultural technology. With machines at the point of expelling men from the productive process altogether, the submission of the mass of men to machines assumes its most degrading form and its most dangerous aspect for the survival of civilization.

The youth—above all the student youth—sense in a confused way the absurdity of a world that could live in peace and plenty but where sordid selfishness, hypocrisy, cynicism, and the threat of nuclear war continue to prevail. Its revolt against authoritarian and conservative institutions is a healthy one and presages a revival of the revolutionary movement wherever it has not yet developed to the heights demanded by history. But in order to have real significance for the future of society, this revolt must be oriented toward a precise goal—the overthrow of capitalist rule and the creation of a truly socialist society. And revolutionary socialists throughout the world must apply themselves to this with perseverance and enthusiasm.

The alternative solutions to socialist revolution continue periodically to reveal their bankruptcy. The experience of the Wilson government in England is the latest resounding proof of this. Here we have a labor party in power by itself for the third time, and for the second time with a comfortable parliamentary majority—a party clearly supported by the majority of the nation. But, faced with the economic difficulties created by the decline of British capitalism, does this party show the slightest socialist audacity, does it challenge the rich and powerful, does

it dare to attack the positions of wealth and scandalous luxury of a parasitic, decadent, and impotent possessor class? Not at all! Under the dictates of international finance capital, it prefers to direct its fire against subsidized milk for children and medicines for the sick. In the space of a few days, it has thrown social-welfare legislation back almost twenty years, doing what no conservative government dared to do. It has frozen wages and accorded enormous subsidies to private capitalists. And, after proclaiming from the rooftops the urgent need for technological modernization, it has ended by postponing the extension of the term of compulsory education to sixteen years!

It has shown no imaginative effort, no daring, no independence of the possessing classes—nothing but abject servility. And this in a relatively prosperous capitalist environment, where there is no world war, no threat of civil war, and not even a serious threat of sabotage from the bureaucracy of the bourgeois state.

In the light of this lamentable bankruptcy, the Bolsheviks' daring in 1917 takes on all the more prominence and historical validity. There are not two roads to socialism—the road of Wilson, MacDonald, Ebert, or Blum on the one hand, and that of Lenin and Trotsky on the other. There is only one road to socialism which emerges from fifty years of history, and that is revolution. The other roads lead only to capitulation to the class enemy and to the most cynical sacrifice of the toiling masses to the profit of a handful of plutocratic magnates.

However, a socialist Great Britain that would dare break with British and international big capital would hold innumerable advantages, undreamed of by those who led the socialist October Revolution to victory. Still endowed with one of the mightiest industrial complexes in the world, a socialist Britain could transform itself into an immense workshop for supplying modern machinery to the underdeveloped countries and for the mass production of machine tools and simplified computers. It could offer to the peoples of the so-called third world the abolition of the system of market prices which systematically impoverishes them. It could break the international oil, tin, and cacao cartels. By abolishing its overseas bases and its useless and costly nuclear armament, it could provide itself with the most democratic and highly developed educational and social-security systems in the entire world. On this basis, it could quickly achieve technological advancement, scientific collaboration with the workers' states, and win great sympathy in Europe and America and, in fact, throughout the world. It

could become the pivot of a Europe evolving toward socialism and of a powerful revival of the socialist movement in the United States itself. It could initiate a turn in world history as important as October 1917. For that only one thing would be necessary: the courage to break with the City, Wall Street, and the gnomes of Zurich and to call on the British working masses to take their fate into their own hands. The Bolsheviks had this courage. The social-democracy always lacks it.

Imprudently venturing into the area of historical predictions, the *Economist*, the British weekly, wrote on January 14, 1967, that the cultural revolution in China might well prove to be the last great revolution and that Mao Tse-tung would bring to a close the revolutionary cycle that began in 1789. With the inimitable cant of the British ruling class, this weekly pretends ignorance of the fact that there were a few revolutions before the French Revolution, that is, before the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie went over to the camp of the counterrevolution. Where would the United States be today without its revolution of 1776? Where would the *Economist* be without the English revolutions of 1649 and 1688?

The choice before humanity is not between a gradual and orderly change and the chaos provoked by revolution. It is between the passive acceptance of the worst catastrophes in the spirit of routine and conservative fatalism, or the courageous resolution to sweep away the obstacles obstructing the road of progress, even at the price of upsetting this decrepit "order."

It is a good bet that the sense of relief of the British ruling class is somewhat premature. The revolutionary cycle is far from over. The British bourgeoisie runs the risk of experiencing still another revolution in its own country and of being overthrown in the very same way it came to power. As we celebrate the October Revolution's fiftieth anniversary, we are witnessing not the end of the twentieth century's revolutionary epoch, but only the end of its beginning.

February 1968

NOTES

1. Georg Lukács, *Lénine*, Etudes et Documentation Internationales, Paris, 1965, pp. 25-31.

2. Paul M. Sweezy and Paul A. Baran, *Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, New York, p. 364; the last articles of Paul Cardan in the now defunct journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie*.

3. I leave aside here the stimuli to the revival of revolutionary struggle in the imperialist home countries which result from the colonial revolution

and the "student revolt," a phenomenon which is becoming universal in the industrialized capitalist countries. However important these stimuli may be, by themselves they would be incapable of altering the relative stabilization of imperialist society if they failed to combine with contradictions emanating from the core of this society. The case of the black revolt in the United States is particularly significant in this regard. The importance of the psychological and political motivations behind this revolt have correctly been analyzed—the influence of the African revolution, the importance of the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War, etc., etc. It is no less apparent, however, that the impact of all these factors would have been infinitely less violent if in the last thirty years the black masses had not experienced an accelerated process of proletarianization and urbanization, if they had not moved from the narrow rural environment of the Southern states to the ghettos of the great industrial centers of the North, and if they had not been the principal victims of an automation process occurring at the same time, with unemployment rates among black youth approaching those of the 1929-33 crisis.

4. This protection has never been more than partial. Even in the richest imperialist countries, the bourgeoisie has been forced to "rediscover" the existence of endemic poverty in its midst. At the same time it rediscovers the "industrial reserve army" which it rechristens the "underclass."

5. The Chinese and pro-Chinese Communist groups assert that, after Stalin's death, a new "privileged and rapacious bourgeoisie" seized power in the USSR. However, all the manifestations of this "bourgeoisie" that they cite—high salaries and flagrant social inequality, the appearance of a "gilded youth" with all the vices characteristic of the rich, the fact that the workers are without the right to defend themselves against the plant managers, phenomena of primitive accumulation among the peasants and craft workers, the free market and the black market, etc.—already existed in the Stalin era and some of these features were even more extensive than today.

6. This would be the first class in history not to occupy a definite place in the productive process; thus it would not even exist as a class before it was in power. It would be the first class without an ideology of its own and without self-consciousness and the first whose ideological activities consisted precisely in denying its own social existence. All these characteristics, which are at variance with defining it as a class, correspond well to its nature as a caste or parasitic layer of the proletariat. Paradoxically, those who label it a class to emphasize their hostility to it, accord it a special honor which it by no means deserves. By this term, they attribute to it an objectively necessary function, at least for a given historical phase.

7. Conservatism, of course, does not mean passivity. The bureaucracy tends to avoid any action which might upset the equilibrium, but when it is directly threatened it knows how to defend itself. Those who exaggerate the bureaucracy's tendency to passivity and see this as an inevitable predisposition to capitulate to its enemies, are periodically surprised both by its violent and successful actions against the class enemy, such as the forced collectivization of agriculture in the USSR and the war against Nazi imperialism, and by its savage repression of workers' revolts, e.g., the crushing of the Hungarian revolution.

8. Marx voiced a presentiment of the danger of such bureaucratization in his writings on the Paris Commune; Kautsky expressed an astonishing awareness of it in his *Foundations of Christianity*.

9. Let me mention two facts only: the inaccessibility for the great mass of citizens of objective sources of information rather than material, pre-selected to suit the interests of the capitalists, and the absence of any democratic organization within the plants where the adult population spends the essential part of their lives.

10. Illegal only because the rights guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution on the basis of the Leninist theory of the state cannot be freely exercised by the citizens of the USSR. Lenin declared himself clearly in favor of *all* workers having free access to the press and to other means of disseminating ideas, excluding only members of the ruling classes or those guilty of counterrevolutionary acts as defined by law; and this in the context of an acute civil war. It never occurred to him to add: "except those workers whose ideas are not pleasing to the government or who criticize its activity in this or that field, and, who, for this reason and without any supporting evidence, are officially characterized as 'anti-Soviet' or 'slanderers of Soviet power.'"

11. It should be mentioned in this regard that in 1964 the USSR published almost twice as many new books (new titles) as the United States and as many as France, West Germany, and Italy put together. In 1966, there were 443,000 doctors in the USSR as against 272,500 in the United States, 56,000 in Great Britain, and 55,000 in France.

12. According to *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, No. 10, 1967, the number declined from 6,500 labor inspectors in 1940 to 3,390 "technical" inspectors in 1966. The powers of these inspectors have been radically reduced. The plant managers infringe the laws protecting labor and the "inspectors" have no power to stop them. In the fishing industry, doctors have set the maximum time that can be spent uninterruptedly on the high seas at 80 to 90 days; the law sets a maximum of 110 days. But in practice these voyages are often prolonged to eight months (240 days!) for purposes of "profitability."

13. *Yunist*, No. 1, 1967.

14. In the first pages of his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

15. See in this regard Chapter 11 which Fernand Charlier devotes to the effective means of combating bureaucracy.

16. The latest example is the frenetic campaigns being launched all over the world to collect food and funds to fight famine in the underdeveloped countries. At the same time, the Executive Committee of the Common Market is organizing the systematic destruction of "surplus" fruit and vegetables. The farmers are being compensated for this "surplus" by a tax imposed on the selling price of agricultural products imported from countries where they are cheaper than in West Europe. That is, the European consumers themselves are being required to finance first of all the establishment of a high cost of living in their own area and secondly the destruction of food in a hungry world.

1. PREDICTIONS OF THE FOUNDERS OF MARXISM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD REVOLUTION

By Luis Vitale

In his article "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx," Lenin said, "The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society. Has the course of events all over the world confirmed this doctrine since it was expounded by Marx?"¹

If the fact that the first successful proletarian revolution then had yet to occur might have cast some doubt on the affirmative answer Lenin would have given to this question in 1913, the events of the past fifty years have removed all dispute. Not even the most recalcitrant enemies of the working class dare deny the objective fact that today's world is advancing toward socialism. Conscious of this process, the imperialists are seeking to postpone their social apocalypse by holding humanity perpetually on the brink of a nuclear holocaust.

I

Marx and Engels' fundamental prediction—that socialism would supplant the capitalist system—has been confirmed by history. More than one-third of humanity—one billion people—has entered into the phase of constructing socialism.

The socialist revolution has acquired a worldwide character, as the founders of Marxism forecast. After the victory of the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary process spread out across the continent (to Hungary, Germany, etc.). At the end of the second world war, the revolution spread to all continents. In Europe there was the triumph of the Yugoslav guerrillas and the establishment of the "people's democracies"; in Asia there were revolutionary victories in China, North Korea, and North Vietnam. In Africa, with the armed uprisings in Angola and the Congo, the revolution which began in Algeria reached the heart of black Africa. The Cuban Revolution meant not only the first socialist revolution in Latin America but the first workers' state established in the Western Hemisphere. And thus the worn-out imperialist argument that the choice was between

East and West, between the "civilized peoples of the Western world" and the "Eastern barbarians," burst like a soap bubble.

The historic interval between the defeats of capitalism has narrowed. Twenty-six years elapsed between the first victorious revolution in Russia in 1917 and the second in Yugoslavia in 1943. There was only a space of six years between the second victorious revolution and the third in China in 1949, and into this calculation must be reckoned the development of the "people's republics" in Eastern Europe and North Korea. Five years elapsed from the Chinese Revolution to the fourth successful revolution in Vietnam, and a similar span of time from this revolution to the fifth great revolution in Cuba in 1959.

There has been an attempt to minimize this process by arguing that there has been no revolution in the highly industrialized countries. Basing their argument on the socioeconomic consequences of the boom, or capitalist peak, that followed the war, the pragmatic politicians have denied validity to the prognosis of Marx. Pragmatic thinkers, incapable of perceiving the long waves of history, fail to understand the necessity of viewing in historical perspective the Marxist postulate that an entire revolutionary epoch is opened up when the development of the productive forces comes in conflict with the existing production and property relations. The bourgeois conquest of power was protracted over four centuries despite the fact that already at the end of the Middle Ages and the onset of the modern period the productive forces of embryonic capitalism had entered into contradiction with the feudal system of production and ownership. The rebellions in the Italian cities, the Portuguese revolution of 1381, the heretical movements, the rising of the Castilian communes, and hundreds of struggles inspired by the nascent bourgeoisie were acute expressions of this antagonism. More than a century passed from the first bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands to the second in England, and another century from that to the definitive victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution with the French Revolution of 1789. History has swept away those partisans of feudal monarchy who, with the Holy Alliance of 1814, forecast the failure of the bourgeois republic—as it will those who have proclaimed the failure of Marxist theory for the highly industrialized countries.

II

Marx and Engels indicated, in accordance with the objective

situation of the world in which they lived, that the revolution would first occur in the advanced countries. Although in *Capital* Marx pointed out the tendency of capitalism toward concentration and monopoly, he could not predict the specific features the capitalist system would acquire in a later stage—imperialism—whose advent came many years after his death. Consequently, he was not able to “foretell” the evolution that would occur in the backward nations, nor still less determine political strategy for these countries.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels declared: “Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilization and with a much more developed proletariat than what existed in England in the seventeenth and France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.”²

Six years later, in an article appearing in *The New York Daily Tribune* on August 8, 1853, entitled “The Future Results of British Rule in India,” Marx stated: “Bourgeois industry and commerce create these material conditions of the new world in the same way as geological revolutions have created the surface of the earth. When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern power of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.”³

Again five years later, writing to Engels on October 8, 1858, Marx predicted that “on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will also immediately assume a socialist character.” But he asked himself with disquiet whether the revolution would not be crushed “in this little corner (of the world), considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still on the ascendant?”⁴

Discussing the Irish question in a letter to S. Meyer and A. Vogt on April 9, 1870, Marx wrote that a decisive blow against the British ruling class would be crucial for the workers’ movement of the entire world. And most of all there is Engels’ famous letter to Kautsky in September 1882 where, in raising the

question of what would happen to the colonies after a victory of the workers' revolution in Europe, he indicated very clearly that the idea that the colonial countries could carry out a socialist revolution before the industrialized ones had not even occurred to him.

The reasons for this unequivocal stand are evident. The founding fathers of historical materialism were convinced that the possibility of a victorious socialist revolution depended on the development of the objective and subjective preconditions, respectively, the advance of the productive forces and the creation of a revolutionary class antagonistic to all private property, which only the sustained development of the capitalist mode of production could assure: "Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under the penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution" (Engels, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*). Moreover, Marx and Engels considered the organizational qualities of the proletariat a result of its social situation, big industry being the indispensable school for developing on a large scale the qualities of discipline, cooperation, and solidarity, without which socialism is inconceivable.

Likewise, Marx and Engels stressed from the first, from the time they became Communists, the necessarily international character of the socialist revolution. Already in *The German Ideology*, they emphasized the fact that the communist revolution had to be a worldwide revolution, because only in the framework of the world market could world production be reappropriated by all men; only in this framework could men be liberated from all their local and national limitations, which are obstacles to their universal development.

More concretely, Marx expressed the opinion, as early as the Revolution of 1848, that any victorious proletarian revolution would be drawn into conflict, if not war, with the international counterrevolution, not only for political but for economic reasons. "Just as the workers thought to emancipate themselves side by side with the bourgeoisie, so they opined that they would be able to consummate a proletarian revolution within the national walls of France. But French production relations are conditioned by the foreign trade of France, by her position on the world market and the laws thereof; how should France break them without a European revolutionary war, which would strike back at the despot of the world market, England?"⁵

And further on in the same pamphlet he states still more explicitly: "Finally with the victory of the Holy Alliance, Europe took on a form that makes every fresh proletarian upheaval in France directly coincide with a world war. The new French revolution is forced to leave its national soil forthwith and conquer the European terrain, on which alone the revolution of the nineteenth century can be carried."⁶

Speaking on the occasion of the anniversary of the *People's Paper*, on April 15, 1856, Marx again stressed that the social revolution was "a revolution as international as the dominion of capital and wage slavery." And it is well known that in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* he scored the German social-democratic leaders because they played down the international nature of socialism.

However, while a high development of capitalist industry is the precondition for the definitive victory of a socialist revolution, that does not imply that the country where the revolution scores its *initial* victory, where the *initial* battles are waged, must necessarily be the country where industry is already the most developed. Marx rather early had a brilliant presentiment of the dialectical interpenetration of economic and social forces throughout the world, which produces a situation much more complex than one where the ripeness of political conditions would be determined simply and mechanistically by the maturity of the economic conditions.

Thus, in *Class Struggles in France*, he examines the relationships between economic crises and political and social revolutions and arrives at the conclusion: "Violent outbreaks must naturally occur earlier in the extremities of the bourgeois body than in its heart, since here the possibility of adjustment is greater than there."⁷ In his previously mentioned letter to Meyer and Vogt, he considered that in the complex of England and Ireland it was backward Ireland, and not the more advanced England, where the first crucial blow against English bourgeois rule was to be struck.

Toward the end of his life, paying close attention to the first signs of social crisis in Russia, he sharpened this dialectical perception still more, as did Engels also. In their preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto* on January 21, 1882, the two wrote: "If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development."⁸

It is apparent then that at this time Marx and Engels conceived simultaneously that the revolution might break out first in Russia, then give impetus to a proletarian revolution in the West and thus that the revolution in Russia would not be a bourgeois-democratic one but would go over to socialism from the village commune. It is true that later Engels again revised this point of view and states, notably in his letter to Danielson of October 17, 1893, that Russia will go from agrarian communism to capitalism and not to modern communism. But, here also, he indicates that this detour was necessary only because the proletarian revolution had been delayed in the West and that the development of Western Europe toward socialism in the decades of the sixties and seventies could have spared Russia the evils of capitalism.

But there is little point in examining in greater detail here the attitude of Marx and Engels on the future evolution of Russia. What is essential here is to understand that the founders of historical materialism, which is also dialectical materialism, had a much less mechanistic concept of the relationship between the development of the productive forces in a *particular country* and the possibility of *starting* the revolution from that country than is generally supposed.

III

The fact that the advent of the socialist revolution has occurred in backward countries has led certain writers to maintain that Marxist strategy is applicable only to feudal regimes. C. Wright Mills went so far as to say: "The sequence of epochs Marx imagined is not necessarily going to happen. The sequence (from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to socialism) is the big historical framework of Marx's theory and expectation. We must now modify it: out of advanced capitalism nowhere has socialism, of any sort recognizable as Marxist, come; out of feudalism socialism of one type has sprung directly."⁹

This thesis is based on the mistake of those sociologists who confuse economic backwardness with feudalism. The authors of this view appear not to recognize that the unequal and combined development of history has led imperialism to infuse capitalist property and production relations through all the pores of Latin American, Asian, and African society. These countries have their feudal or semifeudal survivals but are governed essentially by the laws of the capitalist world economy.

In the epoch of European colonization, the peoples of America, Asia, and Africa entered into the developing world capitalist market. "The modern biography of capital," Marx said, "opens in the sixteenth century, with world trade and the world market." Exchange value, the money economy, exploitation, and the export of raw materials were introduced into societies which had known only use value and the natural economy. At the end of the nineteenth century, the inauguration of a new stage of capitalism—imperialism—critically stepped up the penetration of finance capital into the backward countries, with great capitalist concerns arising to exploit the raw materials and abundant cheap manpower.

For some economists capitalist development and a socially important bourgeoisie are synonymous with the development of the factory system or advanced industry: where there is no advanced industry, there is neither capitalism nor a bourgeoisie. This criterion is useful for measuring the relative advancement of countries but creates confusion if applied to the colonial and semicolonial countries. In such countries, even when there is no advanced industry there exists a system of capitalist production in mining, ranching, and farming; there also exist light industry and a social class—the national industrial bourgeoisie associated with imperialism—governed not by the laws of the feudal system but by the laws of value, surplus value, the profit rate, and fundamentally by the influence of the world capitalist market.

It is true that there have existed, and still do, primitive native communes and semifeudal carry-overs in the relationships among the classes, but these backward elements exist side by side, and are interrelated, with the most modern advances in technology. Along with small family production in the countryside and poor craft workshops rise great capitalist enterprises which progressively condition and distort the overall development of the society. These are the distinctive features of uneven and combined development. In backward countries, the productive system is not fundamentally governed by feudalism but by the new relationships introduced by the expansion of imperialism throughout the world. A large part of the proletariat of the backward countries has come out of enterprises created directly by imperialism. While it is true that the proletariat does not as a rule exceed 10 per cent of the employed population, its specific weight makes it decisive. The revolutionary currents which have sparked the major social transformations in the backward countries have developed within the proletariat.

The Russia of 1917 was not essentially feudal, although the peasants made up the majority of its population, but rather a country characterized by a backward type of capitalist development where the bourgeoisie was incapable of carrying out the bourgeois-democratic revolution. In his book, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin cast considerable light on the coexistence of capitalist production relationships with semifeudal remnants and on the role played by the proletariat in a backward country. Proof of this role is the fact that the Russian proletariat led the uprising with the support of the peasant and other poor strata of the population.

Yugoslavia was a backward country but not a feudal one when its revolution was accomplished in the forties, and there are even slimmer grounds for saying that Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the rest of the East European "people's republics" were feudal countries. Finally, it might still be asked whether China was a feudal country at the time of the victory of the revolution. The fact that China had a peasant and craftworker majority, and a system of agriculture in which numerous remnants of feudalism survived, does not necessarily mean that the nation as a whole was governed by the feudal system. Fundamentally, the Chinese economy of the nineteen-forties was under the sway of Japanese, English, and American finance capital, which had penetrated the northern and coastal regions, and of its junior partner, the monopolistic national bourgeoisie. Behind their feudal facade, the great families, Chang, Kung, Cheng, and Soong, held effective control of the banks and the mining, textile, and metallurgical industries. The big landowners maintained their feudal relationship with their serfs, but their rice, sugar, and cotton enterprises had broken out of the narrow limits of small agricultural and craft production—the essential characteristic of feudalism—to be governed by the general laws of capitalist markets.

And was Cuba a feudal country? Were the sugar and tobacco industries, the backbone of the Cuban economy, feudal in character? Those sociologists who confuse economic backwardness and large landed estates with feudalism will have grave difficulty in proving that Cuba was a feudal country ruled by a medieval knight, Sergeant Batista, a new crusader for the faith and the big capitalist concerns in Cuba. It should be added that the proletariat of the sugar industry on which Fidel Castro and Che Guevara based themselves was not a product of feudalism but of the capitalist development of Cuban agriculture.

In order to conclude that the feudalism-capitalism-socialism sequence is outworn, it would be necessary to demonstrate that those countries where there have been victorious revolutions were really feudal. It is up to the promoters of the thesis that Marxist strategy is applicable only to feudal regimes to prove that Russia, Yugoslavia, "the people's republics," China, and Cuba were really feudal countries at the time of their revolutions.

I do not deny the possibility of historical leaps. All peoples do not necessarily or mechanically go through the same stages. But in each concrete case, generalizations of this sort must be demonstrated through an exhaustive study of the facts. History, that great book of surprises, plays unexpected tricks on schematic thought. The primitive communes did not go over directly to the slaveholding regime; instead transitional societies with distinctive characteristics developed out of the breakup of collective ownership of the land, such as "the Asiatic mode of production" in Asia, the "mark" of the German tribes in Europe, and the high cultures of the Incas, Mayas, and Aztecs in America.

The peoples of Latin America did not go through the European cycle of slavery-feudalism-capitalism but from primitive communes to the incipient commercial capitalism introduced by the European colonists. And in the imperialist epoch the backward countries were affected by the penetration of foreign finance capital, which produced crises in all societies where primitive and feudal production relations prevailed. To sum up: the present workers' states, which are transitional to socialism, have not arisen from feudal nations but from nations with a retarded capitalist development of uneven and combined character.

IV

The role of the peasantry in the revolutionary process of the most recent decades has led certain writers to hold that the founders of Marxism were mistaken in their prognosis that the proletariat would be the historic agent of social change.

This generalization would disregard the fact that the urban proletariat led and decisively participated in the first successful socialist revolution, even though Russia was a country with an overwhelming peasant majority. It wipes out with the stroke of a pen the course of the world working-class struggle, which proceeds from the organization of trade unions and the devel-

opment of revolutionary theory in the nineteenth century to the Russian soviets and the Spanish workers' revolution of 1936, via the Paris Commune, the proletarian insurrections in Hungary, Bavaria, and Germany during the period following the first world war and the great general strikes in France, Italy, Japan, England, and Belgium. The generalization referred to limits itself to a brief period in history, no more than twenty years. It draws no conclusions about the role various sectors of the peasantry play before and after the revolution. Finally, it disregards the fact that the most recent revolutions based on the peasant movement were carried out with a political program taken from the arsenal of the working class.

Those who claim that the founders of Marxism underestimated the role of the peasants are deliberately misleading. Proof of this is the fact that in their correspondence with the Russian Narodniks, Marx and Engels indicated the importance they assigned to the peasantry. Even for Germany, Marx predicted in a letter to Engels on April 16, 1856, "the whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of covering the rear of the proletarian revolution by a second edition of the Peasants' War. Then the affair will go splendidly."¹⁰ Lenin and Trotsky never denied the possibility that the peasantry might initiate the insurrectionary process. In point three of his "Basic Postulates" of the permanent revolution, Trotsky wrote: "Not only the agrarian, but also the national question assigns to the peasantry—the overwhelming majority of the population in backward countries—an exceptional place in the democratic revolution."¹¹ But at the same time Trotsky pointed out that the peasantry was incapable of leading the conquest of power and still less of building socialism. The comparative study of these revolutions shows that Trotsky was right: while indeed the peasantry has been the driving force of the revolutions in the backward countries, these revolutions have not been led by this social stratum but by parties with a proletarian or pro-Marxist tradition.

It is an indisputable fact, however, that in the socialist revolutions of the period following the second world war, the insurrectionary process has *begun* in the countryside. Just as a chain usually breaks at its weakest link in the system of nations, something similar can happen in the system of social classes within a nation. In most colonies and semicolonies the weakest link is the peasantry. The centuries-old exploitation of the peasantry, its penury and poverty-stricken life, its almost marginal situation in society, make of it a stratum apt to initiate insur-

rections, if it finds determined leaders to head the struggle for the land.

Those writers who say that the peasantry has proven itself to be a class as revolutionary or more revolutionary than the proletariat lump all the peasants together as a homogeneous class, overlooking the differences between native communal cultivators and middle and small peasant proprietors and the agricultural proletariat and semiproletariat. The wageworkers in the countryside belong by their role in production to the proletariat and not to the peasantry.

Likewise, the different roles that the peasantry plays before and after the victory of the revolution must be analyzed. When the peasantry fights for the land—which is not a socialist task but a bourgeois-democratic one—it plays a generally revolutionary role *at the start* of the revolution. But once the socialist transformation begins, the small peasant proprietors play a conservative role. Only the agricultural proletariat continues to be the class ally of the urban workers. All the social revolutions of the twentieth century have had to take measures to prevent the peasants from becoming antagonistic to socialism. In the division of the land, the contradictions between the individualist tendencies of the peasantry and the collectivist tendencies of the society in transition to socialism sharpen. The landless peasants can initiate and support en masse an insurrectionary process, but the peasantry as a whole, which includes the smallholders, is not a revolutionary class in itself or for itself. It has no historical perspective of its own.

The insurrection may begin in the countryside but it can attain definitive victory only if it gets the support of the proletariat and acquires a proletarian leadership. The proletariat has shown that it is the only class capable of initiating the construction of socialism after the revolution.

Despite the mass support of certain peasant strata to the revolutions in the backward countries, these revolutions have not been led by the peasantry but by parties with an inclination and programs derived from the Marxist movement, whose theory is based on the proletariat. This holds true equally for the Communist parties that led the Yugoslav, Chinese, North Korean, and Vietnamese revolutions and for movements with an originally non-Marxist leadership (the 26th of July Movement and the FLN in Algeria). These movements, although they have based themselves on the peasantry, cannot be considered peasant parties, since they took their agrarian, anti-

imperialist, and anticapitalist programs from the arsenal of Marxism. Without the advantage of this political orientation, the modern peasants might have committed errors similar to those which produced the failure of the peasant uprisings at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern epoch.

In this sense, also, another of the fundamental prognoses of the founders of Marxism has been confirmed: the necessity of creating a revolutionary party—the subjective factor—capable of leading the exploited classes to victory. The impressionistic politicians who have tried to represent the peasantry as a more revolutionary class than the proletariat seem to be unaware of the fact that this subjective factor has been created over a century of proletarian struggles and experiences. Moreover, the history of revolutions provides us with no examples of peasant parties which have led nor of revolutionary programs produced by the peasantry. In any case, the role of the peasantry in the revolutions of the postwar period is yet to be fully theoretically assimilated.

V

This analysis must include a discussion of the question of armed rural insurrections. While indeed the founders of Marxism wrote about guerrilla warfare, they were convinced that the insurrections would be of an essentially urban character—hence the importance Engels accorded the study of the methods of struggle of the workers in the large cities. Lenin and Trotsky also devoted themselves to the study and application of guerrilla experiences, but they did not emphasize armed insurrection of the rural masses as the most probable perspective in the backward countries.

The unquestionable fact is that the revolutions of the postwar period have put on the order of the day mobile and guerrilla warfare, whose epicenter is in the countryside. The question must be asked whether revolutionary groups and parties have employed this military strategy because they concluded that the landless peasants were the motive force of the process or because they believed that the countryside was the only locale in which the modern bourgeois and imperialist armies could be defeated—or both at once. The credit for having inaugurated this new insurrectionary strategy belongs without question to Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party.

However, the nonurban character of this process has been overemphasized to the point where it has been elevated to an absolute in the idea of an assault on the cities from the rural areas: "the countryside and only the countryside," Lin Piao said, "can provide revolutionary bases." Others, moreover, have overestimated the role a small guerrilla group can play. Such exaggerations have led many revolutionary groups into dangerous errors. Certain guerrilla experiences have been mechanically applied, neglecting political work among the working masses, including among the peasant masses, and conceiving guerrilla warfare not as one method of struggle but as the exclusive method. After the failure of several movements, most revolutionary groups have begun to improve their grasp of the basic problems of insurrectionary strategy. They are beginning to discriminate between Blanquism and putschism and guerrilla struggle, with the understanding that rural warfare is a prolonged process which, as the struggle of the Vietnamese people demonstrates, must be intimately linked to the mass movement.

These living experiences of the masses in the backward countries, their victories and defeats, their correct and incorrect positions, pose new problems of political and military strategy which could not have been foreseen by the founders of Marxism. Many revolutionary cadres educated in the traditional methods of struggle have underestimated the importance of the study and application of armed struggle in the countryside. In recompense, seeing only its successes, the new cadres sometimes neglect to combine the tactics produced by present-day struggles with the tradition and experience of a century of working-class political activity.

Revolutionary Marxists have posed as an urgent task the theoretical assimilation of the recent lessons of armed struggle in the countryside and their integration into revolutionary strategy. What is called for here is not replacement of the traditional scheme of urban revolution with a different one, that of exclusively rural insurrection, but integration of the experiences of the most recent revolutions into Marxist theory. Whether the first phase of the insurrection will be urban or rural, whether the insurrection will proceed from the city or the countryside, will depend on the concrete historical context of each country and on the capacity of the revolutionary vanguard to combine the lessons of the present with those of the past, not only in mass political work but in political-military tasks.

VI

The fact that the onset of the revolution has come in the backward countries has posed new problems for Marxism, especially in connection with the phase of building socialism. Accelerated industrialization has led the workers' states to over-emphasize the role of primitive socialist accumulation. The primacy given to technology and heavy industry, to the detriment of the social and cultural welfare of the workers, has distorted socialist construction. The bureaucracy which expropriated political power from the soviets and workers' councils has been responsible for this deformation.

New developments, which the founders of Marxism in their time could not consider, have emerged: the prolonging of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, a phase that has just reached its half-century mark in Russia; the appearance of a bureaucratic stratum blocking not only the progress of socialist construction but also the onset of the world socialist revolution; the maintenance and even reinforcement of the state apparatus and thus the survival of factors of social, political, and cultural oppression.

Although it is not my concern here to analyze the causes and consequences of this process, I would note only that the deformation of socialist construction under bureaucratic leadership has brought Marxism into disrepute. Nothing else can be said when it is seen that, in the degenerated and deformed workers' states, man remains alienated from his work, the state, and technology and is still imbued with the morality and mores inherited from the capitalist regime. While the change from capitalist relationships and ownership has indeed permitted a certain expansion of the productive forces, this has not meant a qualitative change to a full and free life.

The credit for explaining the causes of this process, which Marx could not foresee, belongs to Leon Trotsky and the present-day revolutionary Marxists. It is an urgent and pressing task to restore the confidence of the workers and intellectuals in the cause of socialism. Socialists must clearly distinguish themselves from the image of "socialism" that the Russian bureaucracy seeks to impose, and revive the original ideals of Marx, for whom real communism meant not only economic change but a total transformation of society — the disappearance of the state and social classes and, fundamentally, the end of

human alienation as the basis for the complete integration of the individual into society.

Fifty years of the Russian Revolution and two decades of the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions and the "people's republics" make it incumbent on us to deepen our theoretical study of what has been done so far on the question of the workers' states in transition. This must be done to avoid new errors, to restore the image of the liberating socialism forecast by Marx and to instill confidence in the workers of the advanced countries and in the women who aspire to their own emancipation and to a better world for their children. In the last analysis, the workers are stirred not by economic transformations alone but by great ideals of social change. It is on the power of these ideals, which are the driving force in the liberation of all humanity, that the fulfillment of the basic predictions of the founders of Marxism depends. While special conditions brought it about that history took a detour and made the backward countries the field of action of these ideals, the further development of the history of our time will reanimate the proletarians of the advanced countries with these ideals, setting their countries again on the road to the classless society envisaged by Marx.

NOTES

1. *Collected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1960, XVIII, p. 582.
2. *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, International Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 44.
3. *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on Colonialism*, Foreign Languages Publishers, Moscow, p. 82.
4. *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 118.
5. Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France*, International Publishers, New York, 1934, p. 42.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
7. *Class Struggles in France*, p. 135.
8. *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, Foreign Language Publishers, Moscow, 1948, I, p. 24.
9. C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists*, Dell, New York, 1962, p. 123.
10. *Marx-Engels: Selected Correspondence: 1846-1895*, International Publishers, New York, 1935, p. 87.
11. *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1965, pp. 152-153.

2. THE THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

By Livio Maitan

As is well known, the theory of the permanent revolution and even the "name," which Trotsky himself was to designate in a preface to *The Year 1905* as "a bit abstruse," have a well-defined source in Marx.

In the concluding part of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels had already put forward the idea that "the bourgeois uprising in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." This prognosis can be said to have been demonstrated incorrect empirically, but it was correctly formulated insofar as it was based on an appreciation both of the weight of the international struggle ("under more advanced conditions of Western civilization"), and the much greater maturity of the domestic forces compared with the heights attained by other countries in the course of their bourgeois revolutions. In other words, Marx rejected the mechanistic interpretation later prevalent among the Mensheviks and held by a "classical" Marxist like Plekhanov, according to which a backward country like Russia also had to pass through all the stages of the bourgeois-capitalist process.

It was clearly impossible for Marx and Engels to develop categorical ideas on such questions; specific circumstances led them to indicate variant lines of development. Thus, in some of their writings the permanent character of the revolution on the order of the day gets the major stress, and in others its bourgeois character—with respect to the objective tasks.¹

But the essential element is that Marx always tended to bring out sharply the irrepressible, primary, and determining role of the class factor which was destined to take clear form in the course of the revolutionary process itself (Engels would speak in his famous letter to Turati of a parting of the ways on the very day of the revolution) and the resultant need to assert and maintain the political independence of the working-class party. The Menshevik theses, however, aside from certain only

seemingly radical features (such as the assertion that the social-democrats could not participate in a revolutionary-democratic government), did not take account at the analytic level of the inherent sterility of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie and ended at the level of practical orientation by relegating the workers' movement to a subordinate position. What the circumstances of 1905 had masked to some extent emerged with full clarity in 1917, when the Mensheviks entered the coalition government and became the last line of defense of conservatism against the revolutionary ascent of the masses.

But there is one document, repeatedly cited and variously interpreted, in which the concept of the permanent revolution is expressed with particular explicitness and incisiveness:

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all of the more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians not in one country only but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. . . . Their [the German workers] battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence!"²

Thus there were the elements in Marx from which Trotsky could draw his concept of the permanent revolution. But, although he was familiar with this Marxist literature, nothing would be more wrong than to suppose that his theory was a doctrinal reconstruction based on superficial analogies.³

In actual fact, Trotsky formulated his theses on the basis of specific historical and political analyses in the context of lively polemics among the various tendencies in the Russian and international workers' movement and in connection with the crucial experience of 1905.

Toward the middle of 1904, after having completed *Our Political Tasks*, which was to appear in Geneva in August, Trotsky moved to Monaco where he lived for several months with Parvus. Parvus, Russian by origin but a naturalized German, had acquired a certain renown for his journalistic work and some Marxist studies and was to exercise a considerable influence on the young Trotsky, who in turn helped him to clarify and complete his thought.⁴ Parvus' influence was especially important in determining the international aspect of

the theory of the permanent revolution. He had, in fact, developed penetrating analyses of the imperialist epoch's tendencies toward military conflict and stepping beyond the boundaries of nation-states.⁵ As to the national aspect, however, in addition to points of similarity, serious differences developed between the two. While Parvus agreed with Trotsky on the need for working-class leadership, he disagreed on a fundamental point: the necessity for going over uninterruptedly from the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution.⁶

Parvus, as has been justly noted by those scholars who have concerned themselves with this question, influenced Trotsky on another plane, *i.e.*, in regard to the interpretation of certain phases of Russian history and particularly the process involved in the formation of the Russian state and of the latter's special function. Another element should be distinguished here, the influence of the liberal historian Milyukov.⁷ But already in *The Year 1905* Trotsky rejected certain of Milyukov's conclusions that could not readily be accepted by anyone basing himself on the Marxist criteria for historical interpretation.⁸

It has been observed that the elements of the idea of the permanent revolution were already to be found in the previously mentioned work *Our Political Tasks*. And, in fact, in his denial to the Russian bourgeoisie in general of any capacity for consistently advancing the democratic revolution, Trotsky had formulated one of the premises of his basic thesis of the necessity of workers' hegemony.⁹

Before the Ninth of January, which was published only after the event because of Menshevik resistance, constituted another step in his development. The objections of the Mensheviks who opposed its publication were justified from their point of view since the young revolutionary generally affirmed the following concepts: distrust for the bourgeois-democratic layers and for the liberals in general, the necessity for workers' hegemony in the large urban centers, and the necessity for peasant support of the workers, who would be the guiding force in the revolution.

Various articles followed from January 1905 on, which later appeared under the title *After the Petrograd Insurrection*, lucid and impassioned pages on the first indications of the ascent of the mass movement. In July, still in 1905, Trotsky took another essential step, coming to a concise formulation of his view of the revolutionary dynamic and of the combination of the revolutionary motive forces which would remain constant from then on. "Naturally," he wrote, "in carrying out its mission, the proletariat seeks the support, as the bourgeoisie once did,

of rival classes and of the petty bourgeoisie. It gives the lead to the countryside, catches up the villages in the movement, forces them to take an interest in the success of its plans. But, of necessity, it is and remains at the head. This is not 'the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry,' it is the dictatorship of the proletariat assisted by the peasantry. Its tasks are not limited to the country's boundaries. By the logic of its situation it must immediately enter into the international area." ¹⁰

It is superfluous to point out that the revolutionary development under way was a vital contributing factor, as in fact was another most important experience of that year—the October strike—in finally clarifying for him the inevitability of proletarian hegemony even in a bourgeois-democratic revolution. ¹¹

His imprisonment, which began early in December, assured Trotsky the necessary leisure for more composed thought and more complete systematization of the argument. The product of this was *Results and Prospects*, which contained a comprehensive exposition of the theory of the permanent revolution and brought to a close the round of experiences and cogitations which had opened with his arrival in Monaco. Thus, Trotsky could justly claim (he wanted thereby to deliberately stress the concrete origins of the theory with which his name was connected) that he came to conceive his interpretation of Russia's revolutionary development "in the time separating the Ninth of January from the October 1905 strike" (*The Year 1905*, p. 5). In a broader sense and with greater exactness, the period of its development can be set within two years: from the summer of 1904 to the first half of 1906. ¹²

In his *Permanent Revolution*, there are numerous and important references to *Results and Prospects*. In substance, this work contained an analysis of why Russian liberalism could not be anything but an abortion and of the converse reasons why the proletariat had assumed a high degree of concentration and thus acquired a great specific social and political weight. From this it followed that the working class would necessarily exercise the leading function in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself, and that this revolution could be brought to a successful conclusion only by a bloc in which the peasants participated, but in a position subordinate to the workers. In its concluding pages, *Results and Prospects* clearly outlined the international perspective. The Russian revolution's fate was indissolubly linked to the fate of the socialist revolution in Europe. "With state power in its hands, with counter-

revolution behind it and European reaction in front of it, it will send forth to its comrades the world over the old rallying cry, which this time will be a call for the last attack: *Workers of All Countries Unite!*" Thus Trotsky's conception was already fully outlined in this work of his youth, which the momentous experience of October was later to confirm and deepen (as well as lend a more flexible understanding of certain links and interrelations); moreover, the full validity of the theory's international aspect would only clearly emerge in the light of the mutations in the fortunes of the first dictatorship of the proletariat from the mid-1920's on.

After *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky again took up these fundamental themes in a speech in 1907 to a congress of the Russian social democracy, and in a subsequent article in Luxemburg's Polish journal, he developed this argument in opposition to the Menshevik and Bolshevik theses of the time, concluding with a forceful and comprehensive recapitulation of his theory.¹³

II

For many years the polemic over the permanent revolution was destined to fall dormant and virtually disappear from the scene. The year 1917 was to pronounce an unmistakable verdict on the questions of the revolution's inner dynamic; and, especially after *The April Theses* of Lenin, Trotsky had no reason to claim an individual position. As to the international perspective, no one disputed the need for a link-up—and quickly—with the European revolution or the necessity of an international basis for socialist construction. This explains why, without provoking any reaction, a Soviet edition of *Results and Prospects* could appear in 1919 and one of *The Year 1905* in 1922, with an important note by the author included in the appendix, and why it was that an editor's note in Lenin's collected works remarked simply that the theory of the permanent revolution had assumed a particular importance after October.¹⁴

The great anti-Trotskyist polemic opened up in 1924 with the so-called literary debate that followed publication of *The Lessons of October*. Replying to those in the ranks of the Opposition itself who held that *The Lessons of October* had inopportunely supplied the dominant group with arguments, Trotsky maintained that, although it had served as the pretext, the struggle would have broken out in any case and

quoted a statement of Zinoviev in support of this: "If there had not been this pretext, another would have been found and at most the discussion would have taken a somewhat different form."¹⁵ This was indeed precisely the way matters stood. Trotsky was to stress repeatedly that the anti-Trotskyist polemic as well as the formulation of the theory of socialism in one country were deeply rooted in the political and ideological needs of the new ruling groups. In this sense, the action of Stalin and his allies was not so arbitrary since it was determined in the last analysis by social pressures whose spokesmen they—largely unconsciously—had become.

As clearly emerges also from the polemics reflected in *The Permanent Revolution*, all aspects of Trotsky's theory came under fire from the Stalin group. But while the aspect of the theory dealing with the inner dynamic of the revolution would assume particular relevance in connection with the events in China, its international "permanence" aspect assumed the greatest prominence from the very first. With Stalin's exposition of the theory of socialism in one country in a revised edition of his *Problems of Leninism* issued late in 1924, the theory of the permanent revolution was stamped as the badge of Trotskyist infamy precisely because it was profoundly opposed to such a concept.

We have already seen that the international aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution was already to be found in Trotsky's youthful writings and had been conclusively established in the final pages of *Results and Prospects*. Leaving aside here the war period,¹⁶ in the years when he worked together with Lenin in directing the revolutionary state and the Communist International, Trotsky was among those who most stressed the necessity of extending the revolution as well as the historically subordinate role the Russian Revolution would assume with the triumph of the revolution in an advanced country.¹⁷ Moreover, that such perspectives were not conceived in ultimate, propagandistic terms but, as a fixed point of reference, exercised a constant influence on his attitudes and mode of thought is confirmed by the allusions that appear in minor writings devoted to very different subjects.¹⁸ But it was the polemics of Stalin and Bukharin and, fundamentally, the evolution of the USSR, which lay at the root of an ever more patent revisionism, that led Trotsky to develop the international aspects of his theory and all their implications in greater depth. This theme was developed through a wide range of arguments and formulations: from historical, theoretical,

and methodological allusions and illustrations to analyses of perspectives for economic development in the USSR—which remained isolated but displayed a capacity for resisting domestic and foreign restorationist forces that no one had foreseen in the first years after October—to analyses of the effects of developments in the USSR on the strategy and tactics of the international movement as a whole. In this respect, one can point to *Permanent Revolution* (in particular, certain chapters and the preface to the American edition), the *Third International After Lenin*, certain methodological prescriptions in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, the theoretical and strategic explanations in his writings in the 1920-36 period, and the essential arguments of *The Revolution Betrayed* aimed at stressing the international context of the decisive struggle between capitalism and socialism, not only on the economic place but also on the more general political plane.¹⁹

The formulation of the antibureaucratic struggle itself, Trotsky's principal theme in the final period, was not conceived in an exclusively Soviet context but rather in an international one.²⁰

III

It would seem that a brief résumé of the positions taken by the various currents in the Russian and international workers' movement on the questions involved in the theory of the permanent revolution would not be devoid of interest—and not merely from the standpoint of historical research.

There is no point in lingering over the Menshevik social-democratic current, which for a long period was the main target of Trotsky's critiques. There are innumerable polemical points scored in *Permanent Revolution* and *The Year 1905* against Plekhanov's concepts and those of the Mensheviks in general and in particular against the views of those authors who, by their lesser caution, more clearly revealed the real implications of their theses (the polemics with Cherevanin are a case in point). It need only be added, as Trotsky himself noted, that on the schema according to which leadership in a democratic revolution would necessarily fall to the bourgeoisie, there was agreement among proponents of views which for an entire period were considered antithetical in the international social democracy (for example, Guesde and Jaurès in France).²¹

As for that peculiar Menshevik, Martov, despite an attempt by Stalin to pretend otherwise, he always took a critical view of the theory of the permanent revolution; he inclined toward

Plekhanov's theses although he interpreted them in what might be called a leftish way. Martov was convinced that in the phase in question the revolution could not overreach the limits of bourgeois democracy and that the workers' movement would therefore have to side with the opposition.²²

I have already discussed the position of Parvus and his differences with Trotsky. Indeed, not only did Trotsky take his distance from certain of Parvus' main slogans (he stated in *Permanent Revolution* that he knew nothing of them at the time they were first put forth), but he differed on the fundamental point of the necessity of going over from democratic revolution to socialist revolution. For Parvus, in fact, the revolution would have to establish a social-democratic workers' government, but such a government would go no further than resolving tasks of a bourgeois-democratic character. Counterposed to Parvus' thesis is that held almost a decade later—in 1916—by Bukharin and adopted by Radek that there were no bourgeois-democratic tasks remaining and that the revolutionary workers' government would immediately have to take on tasks of a socialist character.²³

It is significant that one of Trotsky's articles appended to *The Year 1905*, which I have already mentioned, was first published (1908) in *Neue Zeit* as a review—solicited by the editor himself—of a book by the Menshevik Cherevanin. This confirms the fact that Kautsky did not then completely share the theses of Plekhanov and the Mensheviks and inclined toward the idea of the permanent revolution, giving a characterization of the Russian revolution which was favorably noted even by Lenin.²⁴ As to the revolution's international portent, he wrote in *Iskra*: "Whatever the outcome, the proletariat is emerging from the present day catastrophe of the European proletariat as perhaps its vanguard fighter in the international struggle against all domination and exploitation. Its victory will give new impetus to the struggle of the workers of all lands."²⁵

Not dissimilar judgments were voiced by Franz Mehring,²⁶ while Rosa Luxemburg more explicitly declared herself in agreement with all the basic points of Trotsky's theory.

During the revolutionary events Rosa Luxemburg had already contributed an article, in the same issue of *Iskra* in which Kautsky had written, affirming the proletariat's leading role, "alone as a political class raising the banner, first, of the political emancipation of Russia from absolutism and, second, of its own emancipation from capitalist domination." Subsequently, she was to take part in the debate at the 1905 congress,

polemicalizing against the Mensheviks with arguments similar to those of Trotsky; two years later, as I have already noted, *Przegląd Socjal-Demokratyczny* was to offer its columns to one of Trotsky's most important articles of that period.²⁷

I have already pointed out that the international aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution gave rise to no polemics—or virtually none—until the opening up of the dispute over socialism in one country. The necessity of linking the Russian Revolution with the European revolution went uncontested, and the principle that socialism could in reality be built only in an international framework was accepted with still less controversy. The conclusion to Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* remains the most concisely cogent definition of the objective bases of proletarian and socialist internationalism. As for the real positions of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, these are clarified by Trotsky's article "Socialism in a Separate Country?" (published as an appendix to the *History of the Russian Revolution*) and even by a chapter in Zinoviev's *Leninism*.²⁸ I might only add that in the 1905 period Lenin saw the triumph of the socialist revolution in Europe as a necessary condition for the consolidation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution itself and that other statements can be found in Lenin's writings which are no less explicit than those cited from Trotsky and Zinoviev.²⁹ It is to be stressed then that in the not infrequently stormy debates in the Bolshevik Central Committee in the period from August 1917 to February 1918 the primacy of the international factor stands out as a constant in determining the fundamental decisions as well as the attitudes of the various leaders and groups. This appears, for example, in Lenin's argument in the famous Central Committee session of October 10 and in the arguments adopted by both sides in the dramatic conflict over the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. Even Zinoviev and Kamenev's position on the eve of the insurrection was in large part supported by references to tendencies in the international situation.³⁰

Thus there can be no doubt on this point: it was the theoretical postulation that it was possible to build socialism in one country (to which Bukharin contributed more than Stalin) which represented a break with the traditional theories and positions of Leninism and the Bolshevik Party.³¹

IV

The question of Lenin's 1905 positions and the rectification

effected in 1917 of the traditional Bolshevik conceptions, which is no simple matter in itself and was made exceptionally thorny for many years by the virulent polemics of the Stalin era, is dealt with in *Permanent Revolution*. Trotsky's appraisals—to which he would return some years later in *The History of the Russian Revolution*—seem certainly to be based on accurate documentation and unforced analysis, and they agree in other respects with the judgments of the more serious scholars who have dealt with this question.

In 1905, Lenin's orientation was most fully expressed in the famous essay *Two Tactics of the Social Democracy*, which was to be quoted over and over again in polemics in the Russian and international workers' movement, not uncommonly to try to justify certain positions.³² Lenin, like Parvus and Trotsky, rejected the Mensheviks' scholastic interpretation of the revolutionary dynamic and, although stressing that the Russian revolution would have a bourgeois-democratic character in respect to the tasks confronting it, he asserted the need for a workers' and peasants' leadership. At the same time, he saw the bourgeois revolution in the context of the European dynamic and with the perspective of *uninterrupted* development which would tend to "grow over" into a second revolutionary phase that would be socialist in character.³³

Lenin and Trotsky differed sharply, however, over the political formula for the leadership of the bloc of the driving forces in the revolution, more specifically over the formulation of the interrelationships within it. While Trotsky opted for a dictatorship of the proletariat which would pull the peasant masses in its train, Lenin outlined the perspective of a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. There is scarcely any need to repeat here for the *n*th time that Trotsky did not underestimate the essential contribution of the peasants³⁴ but maintained that, in his view, it was both possible and necessary that the proletariat play the leading role from the very outset. Lenin preferred to leave the question open, admitting the variant possibility that the petty-bourgeois democracy (the peasants) might participate in the revolutionary leadership on the same footing as the workers, or might even assume the preponderant role in it.³⁵ This postulation was bound up with a hypothesis which, in the last analysis, was at the root of this dispute. Contrary to Trotsky, Lenin did not exclude the possibility of the formation of an independent peasant movement which could assume the preeminent role in the bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution in Russia.³⁶ On this point—refuting those who

have chosen to see a line of opposition between Lenin's realism and Trotsky's supposed bookishness — the test of experience showed Trotsky's hypothesis to be the one most in accord with the real tendencies of development.³⁷

There was, however, an element of ambiguity or ambivalence in Lenin's position which Trotsky does not sufficiently bring out. The concept of "growing over" was present in the positions of both; but, most of all from the standpoint of revolutionary strategy and tactics, it was essential to establish whether this was a general historical tendency or a more immediately operative one. In Trotsky's view, the victorious revolutionary dictatorship would be impelled quite quickly to overstep the bounds of bourgeois democracy. In Lenin's viewpoint, two distinct motifs were intertwined: sometimes what emerges is a hypothesis of relatively rapid growing over, an uninterrupted revolution in the strict sense, at other times a variant is outlined of a bourgeois-democratic phase of indeterminable length. In regard to this second aspect, certain pages of the same work, *Two Tactics of the Social Democracy*, come to mind as well as his preface to Marx's letters to Kugelmann (where the prime target, however, is the conservative Menshevik view) and a few other places in his writings in the period 1905-1907. Moreover, one also recalls, lastly, that over and over again he outlined the perspective of growing over to socialist revolution as a necessary response to the reactionary counteroffensive which the Russian bourgeoisie would unleash as a consequence of the victory of the proletariat in the West.³⁸

This element of ambivalence may explain why — if it is possible (which I do not concede) to remove the question from its political and social contexts, which in any case were the determining factors — such different, if not outright contradictory, formulations have been derived from Lenin's conceptions. These range from the idea of uninterrupted revolution, which is not much different in effect from that of permanent revolution, to the concept of a process with clearly delineated stages in which it is accepted that the leading role will go to the so-called national bourgeoisie, which, in the last analysis is hostile to the workers and peasants (and in fact incapable of assuring resolution even of the democratic tasks). There is no doubt, however, that the first of these two interpretations is most in accord with the truer spirit of the Leninist conception. Moreover, while Lenin subjected such hypotheses to rigorous empirical tests, the tendency has prevailed among his epigones, with catastrophic consequences such as those registered in China in 1925-27, to impose schemata on the living reality.

In 1917, Lenin made a timely rectification in his orientation and corrected, though not without difficulty, the course of the Bolshevik Party. The need for a continuous growing over and, still more clearly, the need for a proletarian leadership with clear hegemony irresistibly asserted themselves in his thought; and the new strategic line passed the historic test of October. The revolutionary movement's subsequent experiences—from the third Chinese revolution to Cuba—in which the peasants have had an unquestionable weight, have demonstrated, moreover, that Lenin's 1905 hypothesis, even though it did lead to an imprecise formulation, had discerned real potential elements.³⁹

V

The theory of permanent revolution, above and beyond the Stalinist distortions, has become the object of interpretations and critiques striving to vulgarize it, to reduce it to the dimensions of an abstract intellectual schema virtually removed from time and space. On one occasion, Lunacharsky was to write, "Trotsky showed great acumen even though he erred by fifteen years," while Gramsci more drastically averred, "In reality, his theory as such was bad both fifteen years before and fifteen years after. As in the case of those blockheads Guicciardini discusses, he predicted it approximately, that is, he was right as to his more general factual prediction. This is like someone predicting that a four-year-old girl will become a mother and then, when she does twenty years later, saying, 'I predicted it,' not remembering that when she was four he, certain that she would become a mother, had wanted to rape her."⁴⁰ Bukharin, for his part, thought that it was precisely in the theory of the permanent revolution that he could discern the non-dialectical, rational-formalistic method which, according to him, characterized Trotsky.⁴¹

To take up Gramsci's analogy, it may be replied that, according to the laws of nature, to become a mother the female must unite with the male, pass through pregnancy, etc. Whether or not a given female at a given moment is ready for this is another question: the conditions for maternity are nonetheless those indicated. Thus the theory of permanent revolution was not intended as a highly abstract prognosis of universal validity and still less as a means of predetermining rates of development. It took shape as a concise generalization describing the modes and conditions of a given process of development.

In order to realize the revolutionary-democratic objectives on

the order of the day in backward Russia, it was necessary that the workers play the leading role; and this would have the already indicated implications for the revolutionary dynamic. If the proletariat had been unable to emerge as the leading force or to carry forward its own struggle in accordance with the objective needs which would drive it to exceed the bounds of the democratic revolution, not only would it have been defeated and forced to put off its ascent to a later phase (such an observation goes no further than a banal tautology) but there would have been no real democratic revolution either: this is the essential feature that the Mensheviks and all those who adopted a mechanistic interpretation of Marxism failed to grasp.⁴² There is hardly any need to note that this theoretical prognosis held crucial implications for the determination of tactical and strategic orientations.

As for Bukharin, his work's entire argument, despite its pretensions to rigorous analysis, comes down to the claim that Trotsky underestimated the peasants. This thesis is "proved" by the false attribution of a slogan to him and by an inadmissible polemical distortion of the 1905 formulation, completely disregarding Trotsky's real role in 1905 and still more in 1917.

The fundamental point to be understood, however, is that the theory of permanent revolution was not merely a brilliant intuitive recognition of some of the tendencies of revolutionary processes in the contemporary epoch. Let us take note of what has already been said. Trotsky arrived at this theory on the basis of certain special features of Russian history as well as on the basis of the momentous experiences of the Revolution of 1905. He returned to the definition of the peculiarities of Russian history, moreover, about thirty years later in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, which, in fact, opened with a chapter entitled "Peculiarities of Russian Development."⁴³ His theoretical formulation of the 1905 experience enabled him, moreover, to approach the more crucial experience of 1917 with the requisite analytical tools and thus to intervene as a major figure in the triumphant revolutionary process. Those who set their sights on a purported generality of the theory of the permanent revolution, or more generally a formalism in Trotsky's thought, would do well to remember that in 1917 Trotsky did not—or virtually not—occupy himself with reaffirming general schemata: rather he concentrated on specific analyses, on defining the concrete forms and conditions for the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat and a rapid passage to a more properly socialist revolution.

The experiences of the latter half of the twenties—both in the

USSR and internationally—roused Trotsky not only to defend his earlier theories but most of all to enrich them substantially. On the one hand, the broader validity of the theory of the permanent revolution as the key to interpreting the tendencies and dynamic of the colonial and semicolonial countries appeared more clearly to him. On the other, the prolonged isolation of the Soviet state offered him a demonstration of the implications of the negative variant as to the international aspect of the permanent revolution. Even in this respect, it would be ridiculous to reduce Trotsky's thinking to the simple postulation of the theoretical impossibility of socialism in one country. Trotsky concretely analyzed the reasons why socialism could not be constructed in one country and the forms of degeneration which were occurring in the USSR. Trotsky's major contribution, his great innovation, was this analysis of the problems of the transitional phase and of the phenomenon of bureaucratization, whose historical importance can no longer be doubted. ⁴⁴

Thus the theory of the permanent revolution formed the basic skeleton, which was gradually filled out with exact analyses and enriched with ever new content, of Trotsky's conception of the phenomena of our age.

Finally, it should be said, if only briefly, that the study of the various aspects of the theory of permanent revolution holds more than mere historic interest. An examination of the revolutionary process of the last twenty to twenty-five years that separates out the fundamental elements from the secondary ones, and goes deeper than the always inadequate and often grossly misleading formulas and ideologies of the principal figures themselves, cannot but confirm Trotsky's analytical criteria. The dynamic of the Yugoslav Revolution comes to mind. Initially this revolution confronted tasks that were bourgeois-democratic in character, such as the struggle against imperialism, the agrarian and national questions, and was able—despite bureaucratic deformations—to solve them with a leadership of a worker-peasant social character; and in the course of this, it began to undermine the structural bases of the capitalist bourgeoisie, whose state apparatus was undergoing a rapid succession of mortal blows (in the context of the guerilla struggle and the constitution of liberated zones). ⁴⁵ The revolutionary process in China is perhaps a still clearer example in that, despite ambiguous formations by the Communist leading group, it developed rapidly and uninterruptedly from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist phase. ⁴⁶

In Cuba this experience was repeated with important varia-

tions but in accordance with a substantially identical logic. A revolutionary movement, called into being by the ferocious Batista dictatorship and by national oppression at the hands of American imperialism, which was inspired by the revolutionary-democratic aspirations of peasant layers calling for land reform, was very quickly forced by the inevitable development of the class struggle nationally and internationally to make a choice between relinquishing its democratic objectives—and thereby becoming just one more of the frequent Latin-American shakeups—and resolutely adopting measures of a socialist character. It is to the historic credit of the Castro leadership that it did not hesitate in making this choice, later contributing a theoretical evaluation of its experience in documents like the exemplary Second Declaration of Havana. Conversely, a whole series of experiences—from the tragic experience in Indonesia to the fall of Nkrumah—have provided a kind of negative confirmation. Where democratic anti-imperialist revolutions have not developed into socialist revolutions, retrogression has set in, preventing the solution of the democratic tasks themselves and largely wiping out previous conquests.⁴⁷

On another plane, the precipitous development of productive technology in the capitalist system itself has made ever more absurd the perspective of building socialism within the bounds of a national state. At the same time, the conflicts and contradictions tormenting countries with collectivist regimes are largely a result of the influence of the world capitalist market as well as a consequence of their inability to create a supranational economy based on real equality.

In the analysis and definition of the problems of the colonial and semicolonial regimes, as well as the problems involved in relations between nationally structured collectivist systems, the criteria and major elements of the theory of the permanent revolution continue to be, directly or indirectly, at the center of debates, disputes, and polemics. This is a sure sign that they are not merely a matter of interest to scholars or the habitués of historical archives.

NOTES

1. In addition to the writings elsewhere cited, see Engels' article, "Marx und Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung," *Werke*, XXI, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, pp. 16-24; and also a famous letter to Kugelmann of December 28, 1862, *Werke*, XXX, pp. 639-41.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1950, I, pp. 102-108. On the permanent character of the revolution see also articles by Marx from 1851 to 1852 collected in the volume *Révolution et Contre-Révolution en Allemagne*, Costes, Paris, 1933, pp. 57, 114, and 183.

It is scarcely necessary to note here that the international dimension of the revolutionary process is ever present in Marx, and in its dual form: the necessarily international character of the construction of socialism and the need for an international perspective in political strategy. (These two aspects are jointly examined, for example, in a letter of Marx to Engels dated October 8, 1858 in *Werke*, XXIX, pp. 359-61.)

3. In the years around 1905—and subsequently—in addition to Marx and Engels, Trotsky not infrequently refers favorably to Lassalle (*cf. Die Russische Revolution 1905*, Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten, Berlin, 1923, pp. 224, 228n; and *Their Morals and Ours*, Merit Publishers, New York, 1966).

4. *Cf.* Isaac Deutscher's opinion on this point in *The Prophet Armed*, Oxford Press, New York, 1963, pp. 98-116. To give an example of this reciprocal influence between Trotsky and Parvus, Trotsky wrote a pamphlet entitled *Before the Ninth of January* under Parvus' influence; Parvus later, on reading the draft, decided to write a preface in which he developed the conclusions more fully than the author himself had done.

5. A series of essays by Parvus appeared in *Iskra* subsequent to February 1904, after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese conflict.

6. In the above-mentioned introduction to *Before the Ninth of January*, for instance, Parvus wrote: "The provisional government in Russia will be a government of workers' democracy . . . Because it is the Social Democratic party which is at the head of the revolutionary movement, the government will be a Social Democratic one . . ."

7. Milyukov set forth his interpretations in his *Ocherki po Istorii Russkoi Kul'tury* (Outlines of Russian Culture).

8. *Cf. Die Russische Revolution 1905*, p. 18.

9. *Cf.*, for example, a valuable study by Giorgio Migliardi, "Trotskij dal Menscevismo alla Rivoluzione Permanente," which appeared in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, vol. III, fasc. 9.

10. *Cf. Die Russische Revolution 1905*, p. 228. It is explained in a note that the censorship accounts for "some very vague expressions."

11. *Ibid.*, p. 81. "The October strike was the demonstration of proletarian hegemony in the bourgeois revolution and of the hegemony of the cities over the agricultural countryside at the same time."

12. Conceived as a concluding chapter to *Nasha Revoliutsia* (Our Revolution), *Results and Prospects* went almost unnoticed even in the political circles most directly interested. Moreover, almost all the copies were confiscated by the police.

13. The 1907 speech is reprinted at length in Chapter 4 of *Permanent Revolution*. The 1909 article was reprinted in the appendix to *Die Russische Revolution 1905* [*The Year 1905*], pp. 231ff.

14. For the note concerning Lenin's timely move to reorient the party, cf. *Die Russische Revolution 1905*, p. 231n. On the editor's note, cf. *The Permanent Revolution*, p. 42n.

15. *The Stalin School of Falsification*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1962, p. 90.

16. On the necessity of an international revolutionary perspective, cf. for example, *The Bolsheviks and World Peace*, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1918, pp. 28-29.

17. Cf., for example, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1945 and 1953, I, p. 268 and II, pp. 343-45. Cf. also *La Questione Italiana al III Congresso dell'Internazionale Comunista*, Rome, pp. 114-15.

18. Cf., for example, *A Paradise in This World* (a speech of April 14, 1918), Colombo, Ceylon, 1957, pp. 11-12.

19. Cf., in particular, *Ecrits 1929-39*, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie., Paris, 1955; *Revolution Betrayed*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1965, pp. 57-58 and 190-91.

20. Cf. *Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 285-86 and *In Defense of Marxism*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 7.

21. At the 1905 congress, the Menshevik point of view was presented in its most explicit form by Axelrod and Martynov.

For a paraphrase of the Menshevik positions, cf. *Die Russische Revolution 1905*, p. 211. In the same book (in particular on pp. 325-27) the polemic with Plekhanov and Cherevanin recurs. A résumé of Plekhanov's position was contained in an essay published in Geneva in 1905 entitled *O Nashei Taktike po Otnosheni k Bor'be Liberal'noi Burzhuazii s Tsarizmom* (On Our Tactics in Regard to the Liberal Bourgeoisie's Struggle Against Czarism).

22. Martov's theses were set forth in articles in *Iskra* (Spark), in its Menshevik version, in particular in articles shortly before and after January 1905. In the issue of December 1, 1904, an article appeared on the working class and the bourgeois revolution, and in No. 93 Martov developed a polemic against Lenin.

23. For Parvus and Bukharin's theses, cf. *Permanent Revolution*, the end of Chapter 2 and *passim*.

24. Cf. his article "The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution," which Lenin praised (*Collected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1960, XI, p. 65). Lenin and Trotsky's concurrence in a favorable judgment of an article by Kautsky is explained by the fact that this article posed from a standpoint essentially opposed to that of the Mensheviks the problem of the character of the revolution and the neces-

sity of peasant support, without, however, taking up the problem of the specific formula for the leadership of the revolutionary bloc.

25. Cf. *Iskra*, No. 85, January 27, 1905, which is also cited by Migliardi.

26. Mehring's views were contained in an article which appeared in No. 10 of *Nachalo* under the title "Nepereryvnaia Revolutsia" (Uninterrupted Revolution). Cf. also *Die Russische Revolution 1905*, p. 7; and *The New Course*, New Park, London, 1956, p. 53.

27. For Stalin's contradictory judgments on Luxemburg's positions, cf. Trotsky, *Ecrits 1929-39*, I, pp. 328-29.

28. Cf. *La "Rivoluzione Permanente" e il Socialismo in un Paese Solo*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1963; the editor of this volume, Giuliano Procacci, stresses the ambiguity of Zinoviev's work. Aside from the documentation he offers, Zinoviev plays a bit on the distinction between the victory and the definitive victory of socialism, as Stalin himself, moreover, had done (cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 228, 229, 246). But Zinoviev concerned himself with the domestic factors and considered the definitive triumph of socialism in Russia alone impossible, even aside from the possible intervention of unfavorable international factors, while for Stalin the impossibility of definitive triumph was posed in terms of the possibility of restoration imposed from abroad.

29. As regards, on the other hand, the two articles on the United States of Europe and on cooperation, favorite subjects of Stalin's polemics, cf. Trotsky's analyses of them in *The Third International After Lenin*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1936, pp. 10-17.

30. Cf. *Les Bolcheviks et La Révolution d'Octobre: Procès-Verbaux du Parti Bolchevique Août 1917-Février 1918*, Maspero, Paris, 1964, pp. 136-39, 143-44, 237-41.

31. Shapiro has noted that while for Stalin the need to bolster the Soviet state had absolute priority, Bukharin conceived the Russian socialist state as "a mighty lever of the international proletarian revolution" (*The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Random House, New York, p. 354).

Other points of divergence between the two are indicated by Carr and taken up by Procacci (*La "Rivoluzione Permanente" e il Socialismo in un Paese Solo*, p. 179). But in practice it turned out that these shades of difference, real or presumed, had no great importance in the struggle against Trotsky from 1924 to 1927 for the imposition of the new theoretical and strategic line. As for Stalin, a first vague anticipation of his thesis may perhaps be discernible in a statement of his before the Sixth Bolshevik Congress (1917) in which he declared his opposition to an amendment submitted by Preobrazhensky to expressly link up the socialist revolution in Russia with the proletarian revolution in Europe.

The conception of the transition to socialism—and of overcoming the traditional economic categories—also within national boundaries was codified in Lapidus and Ostrovityanov, *Précis d'Economie Politique*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1929, pp. 412-13.

32. As occurred in Italy, for example, in 1944-45. See my appraisal of this in *Teoria e Politica Comunista del Dopoguerra*, Schwarz, Milan, 1959, pp. 36-38.

33. As I have already pointed out, it was in fact from Lenin that Trotsky borrowed the expression "growing over." To further stress the points of agreement, Trotsky cites the episode in which Lenin accepted an amendment by Krassin (Zimin), which in reality was inspired by him (*cf. Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, and Lenin, *Collected Works*, VIII, pp. 398-99).

34. It must be emphasized that recent Soviet historical studies have also been inspired by such outmoded motifs (*cf.* the article by N. P. Mikeshin in *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, December 1965, which purports to give an accurate analysis of Trotskyism while, in fact, only rehashing the arguments of the "literary debate" in 1923-24 and the polemics that followed it).

35. *Collected Works*, VIII, p. 291, where the hypothesis is put forth of a "conquest of power by the revolutionary peasants."

36. I have already stressed elsewhere that Lenin applied rigorous criteria for determining the independence of a peasant movement or party, so that for example he never accepted this characterization for the Social Revolutionary Party with its large peasant base and, in 1917, often radical positions.

37. I cannot stop here to deal with another vexed question: whether or not a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was actually realized in 1917 in the period preceding October. Trotsky's reply to Radek—who held an affirmative position on this point—is contained in Chapter 3 of *Permanent Revolution*, which I recommend. It is clear in any case that in 1917 Lenin employed this formula in a manner very different from that of 1905, applying it to a situation of dual power and not to a state leadership in the regular sense. The fact that the alternative government represented by the soviets became the effective state power only in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat after the imposition of workers' hegemony within them implies a definitive answer to this theoretical and political question.

38. The importance which Lenin attached to his hypothesis of a bourgeois-democratic phase is confirmed by the fact that he projected it also for a revolution in Germany.

39. Lenin clearly indicated the reasons for his rectification in 1917 (*cf.* for example, *The October Revolution*) and explained how he came to conceive of the necessity of a rapid growing over into the socialist phase of the revolution (*cf. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Renegade Kautsky*). For his evolution, *cf.* also *Letters From Afar*. He subsequently explained on repeated occasions that the bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution properly speaking lasted only until the summer and fall of 1918 (*cf. The October Revolution: The Stalin School of Falsification*, p. 292; etc.). For Lenin's admission to Joffe of the correctness of Trotsky's positions on the questions of permanent revolution, *cf. My Life*, Charles Scribners, New York, 1931, p. 535.

As to the relations between Lenin and Trotsky, *cf.* Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, New York, Macmillan, 1951, I (in particular pp. 60-63). It should be noted that the English scholar considered well founded Trotsky's assumption that Lenin could not have had direct knowledge of

Results and Prospects and based himself on a secondhand quotation from Martov.

40. Cf. *My Life*, pp. 180-81, for the quote from Lunacharsky followed by Trotsky's reply. Cf. Gramsci, *Note sul Machiavelli*, Einaudi, Turin, 1955. On Gramsci's references to Trotsky, cf. my observations in *Studi Gramsciani*, Rinascita, Rome, 1958, pp. 579ff; and in *Trotsky Oggi*, Einaudi, Turin, 1959, pp. 22-23. Cf. also three articles published in *Bandiera Rossa*, 1951, Nos. 5, 6, and 7, in reply to Lucio Lombardo Radice's distortions.

41. Cf. G. Procacci, *Sulla Teoria della Rivoluzione Permanente*, p. 99.

42. Clarifying the negative variant was—and is—an important historical-theoretical problem. In the negative hypothesis, in substance, a type of backward society would have been perpetuated in which, to repeat Engels' famous expression, there would have been all the disadvantages of the capitalist regime without its "relative and transitional advantages"; whereas, the interest of the workers lay in an advanced revolutionary-democratic solution which would have objectively facilitated the passage to the socialist revolution.

43. Cf. also *History of the Russian Revolution*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1936, pp. 463ff.

44. Trotsky once wrote: "The dialectics of the process are really not very complex. But they are easier to formulate than to discover every time in the living facts" (*My Life*, p. 224).

45. For the interpretation of some Yugoslav Communist theoreticians, cf. in particular a report by Kardelj to the 1948 Yugoslav Communist Party congress (pp. 58-59 of the Italian version).

46. As regards the formulations of the Chinese Communist Party leaders, cf. *Dai Processi di Mosca alla Caduta di Krusciov*, Bandiera Rossa, Rome, pp. 123-24. Above all since the beginning of their polemics with the Soviets, the Chinese Communists have begun to emphasize an interpretation of Lenin's concept of uninterrupted revolution which is closer to the conception of permanent revolution (cf. for example, a report by Lu Ting Yi, Hsinhua News Agency, April 23, 1960).

47. For an understanding of these tendencies and processes, for example, in certain African countries, it seems that criteria like those contained in *Permanent Revolution* are not without their interest.

3. THREE PHASES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By Sirio Di Giuliomaria

I. The Political and Social Lessons for Today of the October Revolution and the Seizure of Power

Fifty years ago the workers and poor peasants of Russia, led by the Bolshevik Party, mounted an assault on the power of the capitalists and the landowners and instituted the dictatorship of the proletariat. They built the first workers' state in the history of mankind. The celebration of this immensely important event cannot pass without an examination of its historical, political, and social content and the lessons that must be drawn from it for the struggle of today's revolutionary movement.

The principal lessons of the October Revolution may be outlined as follows:

1) *The necessity for the revolutionary road.* This does not simply mean violent insurrectionary action, but the necessity of breaking up the bourgeois state apparatus and creating a new state based on organizations representing the workers and poor peasants. The Russian Revolution gave clear and unmistakable content to this idea, which is the basis of any revolutionary strategy worthy of the name, and provided a demonstration of it.

The cogitations of all the opportunist tendencies—from the social-democrats to the Khrushchevites—which attempt to prove that the thought of the Marxist classics on such problems is applicable only to certain times and certain places, inexorably crumble in the face of decades of experience by the international workers' movement. Only in those countries where the workers and peasants have followed the example of the October Revolution and chosen the road of armed struggle has the capitalist regime been overturned. But in those countries where opportunist leaderships have channeled the workers' desire for struggle into the narrow dead end of parliamentarism and nonviolent action, there have been only defeats and disillusionments. As for the argument that the East European countries offer a "historic" example of the conquest of power by the peaceful

road, it is so nonsensical and ridiculous that it is not even worth discussing.

But where the opportunist conceptions reveal their fallaciousness still more is in their proposal to "improve" and "reform" the bourgeois state. Here, also, the contrast between the achievements of the first victorious proletarian revolution and the reformist or neoreformist experiences is quite clear. The October Revolution swept away the whole rotten and rickety framework of the old state, replaced it with new forms of social organization and new property relations, and laid the foundations for a new kind of economic and social development. On the other hand, the great programs of reform which have been advanced, in good or bad faith, within the context of the capitalist states and the old social order, have always failed miserably; they have in effect become a prop of the ruling classes, whom the reformists claim they want to oppose, but whom they oppose only verbally.

2) *The necessity of building and educating a revolutionary party in which theoretical and practical work are based on a harmonious and democratic relationship between a picked leadership and a conscious and militant rank and file.* The defeats suffered in a whole series of countries both before and after the Russian Revolution show that the subjective factor, *i.e.*, the revolutionary party, is a crucial element in determining the proletariat's victory in the decisive political battles and the struggle for the conquest of power. Building and developing a revolutionary party—a party not only armed with a revolutionary program and ideology but able to translate the slogans of a transitional program into effective terms—is one of the fundamental tasks of the revolutionary vanguard.

3) *The necessity of developing tactics to bring the masses to attack the bourgeois state without hesitating at the favorable moment.* The Leninist leadership fought a long and determined battle against opportunist tendencies—the main enemy—but did not hesitate to direct its fire against extremist and sectarian tendencies both inside and outside the party: that is, against tendencies which stress primarily propaganda slogans and therefore prove incapable of formulating a program which could *in reality* mobilize broad sectors of the masses in revolutionary struggle. One of the original and fundamental contributions of the Bolshevik Party was the creation of a tactic continually taking into account the level of understanding of the masses without, however, adapting to that level, so that it was able to take the lead of the mass movement as it developed.

In his essay, *The Lessons of October*, Trotsky stressed one of the fundamental aspects of the insurrection's success: the

Bolshevik leadership's ability to grasp that the situation was favorable and its recognition of the necessity of acting before this situation could deteriorate.

"The strength of a revolutionary party increases only up to a certain moment, after which the process can turn into the very opposite. The hopes of the masses change into disillusionment as the result of the party's passivity while the enemy recovers from his panic and takes advantage of this disillusionment. We witnessed such a decisive turning point in Germany in October, 1923. We were not so very far removed from a similar turn of events in Russia in the autumn of 1917. For that, a delay of a few weeks would perhaps have been enough. Lenin was right. It was *now or never*."¹ And in the same essay, Trotsky observed acutely: "To mark time, even for a few hours, is to restore a moiety of confidence to the ruling class, while taking it away from the insurgents."²

4) *The necessity of constructing directly representative workers' bodies in the course of the struggle preceding the seizure of power and training the workers in the democratic operation of these bodies.* The experience of the Russian working class in the soviets, going back to the Revolution of 1905, greatly contributed to raising its level of general political consciousness. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was the expression of the consciousness of the most advanced sectors and at the same time a means for mobilizing broad layers of the masses.

Two conclusions should be drawn from this experience: (a) The political line of "workers' control" must be central to the revolutionary strategy of the transitional program in a whole series of countries and not just one of many slogans. (b) It is unlikely that the organs of the new state to be substituted for the bourgeois state (which the revolution must destroy) will develop spontaneously. Every effort must be made, therefore, to educate the working class for democratic management of the future workers' state, even before the taking of power. Moreover, the fundamental premise and the basic means of struggle against all forms of bureaucratism, which represents a constant danger of degeneration of the workers' state, are the creation and democratic operation of workers' councils.

5) *The Russian Revolution broke the capitalist system at its weakest link and represented the first historical confirmation of the theory of the permanent revolution.* Experience since that time, moreover, has demonstrated that the greater weakness of the class enemy in the underdeveloped countries makes it easier to win power there than in the advanced capitalist countries, but at the same time the conquest of power in the underdevel-

oped countries poses greater problems for the political and economic consolidation of the revolution.³

6) *A demonstration of the superiority of the socialist mode of production over the capitalist mode of production.* In spite of the handicap of bureaucratic deformations, in spite of the liquidation of leading cadres by the Stalinist repression, in spite of the enormous losses in men and *matériel* caused by the war, the Soviet Union has experienced a rate of growth without precedent or analogy in any of the countries in the capitalist-dominated area; its growth in strength has surpassed even the expectations of the Bolshevik leadership.⁴

Today the Soviet Union is the second largest industrial power in the world. The successes achieved by the USSR in the industrial area, in space research, and in arms technology are indices of this superiority which all can see. Wherever the proletariat has won power, from the USSR to People's China, from Cuba to Vietnam, it has wrought transformations as yet unknown to other countries which started off from an equal economic level. If the conscious participation of the workers in the productive process had not been hampered and blocked by repressive and bureaucratic methods, it may easily be imagined that the results achieved would be still more imposing.

7) *The necessity of an internationalist view of the struggle.* The Bolsheviks realized—as Lenin stated in his "Letter of Farewell to the Swiss Workers" (April 8, 1917)—that "socialism cannot win directly and immediately in Russia" and that the Russian Revolution must be "the prologue of the world socialist revolution, a step toward it." Both before and after the conquest of power, the Bolsheviks always devoted great attention to the development of the revolutionary movement internationally. This continued until the formulation of the Stalinist theory of socialism in one country restricted the party's vision to the USSR, then completely bureaucratized. The Third International was the political and organizational expression of the internationalist bent of the Bolshevik Party.

8) *The Russian Revolution has been an example and impetus to the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of the world, especially the colonial peoples.* It has been concrete proof that capitalism is a historically outworn system which can be overthrown and destroyed. Following the example of the Bolsheviks, other peoples have struck out on the road to the conquest of power and the construction of an economy based on collective productive relations.

9) *The aggressions of international capitalism against the Soviet workers' state posed the problem of defense of the USSR*

from the assaults of imperialism. The revolutionary vanguard has correctly understood this necessity as a struggle to defend the bases laid down by the October Revolution. It has fought on the one hand against the capitulationist positions of the social-democracy, which basically paralleled the position of the international bourgeoisie; on the other hand it has combated sectarian conceptions, which by defining the social character of the USSR as "state capitalism" (a definition as empty as it is hasty) repudiated the task of defending the first workers' state against the attacks of the class enemy. The revolutionary vanguard has correctly maintained that the struggle to defend the USSR cannot be understood as support for the positions of the bureaucratic leadership, but rather as a struggle against this leadership's policy and the basis of its power; because the revolutionary regeneration of the Soviet Union is the precondition for a more effective struggle in defense of the Soviet workers' state.

In their celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, the present Soviet leadership and the opportunist leaderships of the Communist parties linked to it have ignored the role of Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders. This fear of the historical truth is a further proof of the revolutionary power that October still retains. For those who have betrayed the spirit of October, even the commemoration of some of its leaders represents a mortal danger.

II. The Bureaucratic Degeneration of the Soviet Union

The power and force of the Russian Revolution have been to a considerable extent deflected by the bureaucratization of the state, which developed through the formation of a bureaucratic caste expropriating political power from the ruling class, the proletariat. Thus a contradiction arose between two fundamental aspects of the role that the Soviet Union plays. On the one hand, it plays a progressive role linked to the social bases established as a result of the October Revolution; on the other hand, because of the bureaucratic leadership, it acts as brake both in the USSR itself and internationally. Understanding the USSR's dual role is essential in order to be able to explain a series of important events of concern to the workers' movement and for a scientific analysis of the social character of the USSR.

In his last period of political activity, and even while greatly weakened by his fatal illness, Lenin began to recognize bureaucratization as a very grave danger for the young Soviet state and to fight against it. Naturally, Lenin—like Trotsky and the

Bolsheviks who later constituted the Left Opposition—could not see the *extent* of this danger clearly from the outset, since it represented a relatively new phenomenon, above all in connection with a workers' state. Lenin himself wrote: "It is a problem which we have as yet been unable to study."⁵

Already in his last article, "Better Fewer, But Better," Lenin put his criticism of the state apparatus in the forefront and strongly stressed the necessity of applying remedies which could correct certain defects. "Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say disgusting, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects . . ."⁶ But his criticism also struck at the party apparatus.⁷ However, the remedies he suggested in this article could be only of a general character, in conformity with the nature of the article itself.

"We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

"We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine."⁸

But in his last letters, Lenin, ever more conscious of the danger, clarified his ideas and proposed more detailed remedies.⁹ It is sufficient to quote some passages from his *Letters to the Congress*.¹⁰

In proposing an increase in the number of central committee members from fifty to a hundred, Lenin maintained that it was a necessity to elect a considerable number of workers to this body. "The enlistment of many workers to the C. C. will help the workers to improve our administrative machinery, which is far from perfect."¹¹ He went on to make this point more clear, showing his concern about bureaucratic tendencies: "The workers admitted to the Central Committee must not, in my opinion, come mainly from among those who have had long service in Soviet bodies (in this part of my letter the term workers everywhere includes peasants), because those workers have already acquired the very traditions and the very prejudices which it is desirable to combat.

"The working-class members of the C. C. must be mainly workers of a lower stratum than those promoted in the last five years to work in Soviet bodies; they must be people closer to being rank-and-file workers and peasants, and who are not of the category of direct or indirect exploiters."¹²

In a letter written two days afterward, Lenin made a point

of criticizing a tendency to "exaggerate the administrative" and stated that "it is just as harmful to exaggerate 'administering' as it is to exaggerate anything at all."¹³

Lenin's stress on criticizing the structure and functioning of the state and party apparatus is a dominant theme in his last articles (for example, his famous *Testament*). In several of these writings, he already pointed out some of the factors in the development of the bureaucracy. "It must be recognized," he stated in a letter of March 1922 to the members of the central committee, "that the party's proletarian policy is presently determined not by its members but by the immense and unshared authority of this very thin layer which can be called the old guard of the party."¹⁴ And, criticizing the party organization in Moscow, he wrote: "What then is lacking? It is very clear what the Communist leaders lack; it is education. Take the case of Moscow: 4,700 Communist officials and an enormous mass of bureaucrats. Who leads and who is led? I very much doubt that it can be said that the Communists are leading; I think it can be said that they are led."¹⁵

After Lenin's illness forced him, toward the end of 1922, to give up the active work of leadership, a real and secret faction was formed in the politbureau by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, the so-called Troika. Since the politbureau was reduced to six full members, clearly a group including half of these that moved in a coordinated and concerted manner had a very great opportunity to impose its will; this was all the more true because the other three full members (Trotsky, Tomsky and Bukharin) and the two candidate members (Rykov and Kalinin) had no point of basic political agreement.

The Tenth Party Congress, which began on March 18, 1921, had voted a motion ("On Party Unity") which prohibited the formation of factions. These measures, which were primarily suggested by Lenin, were motivated by a preoccupation with safeguarding the party's internal unity at a time when it was the only political force supporting the regime. At the same time, however, the Tenth Congress decided to carry out a purge which would remove the politically weaker elements from the party's ranks.

Naturally the adoption of this motion did not mean a ban on the right of criticism or minority rights. Aside from the explicit statements made on this occasion,¹⁶ it is sufficient to recall that at the same time the Congress elected members of the Workers' Opposition, the faction headed by Shliapnikov and Kollontai, to the central committee and rejected their resignations. Moreover, Shliapnikov was included as a minority

representative in the commission designated by the central committee to supervise the work of the purge.

These measures could have had a merely temporary validity in an emergency situation and during a political and economic period of brief duration—which was the intent of Lenin who proposed them and the majority of those who approved them. However, the introduction of such measures in a situation objectively favoring bureaucracy helped to pave the way to power for Stalin, who assumed the role of this bureaucracy's most conscious representative. Lenin's death, moreover, eliminated a leader whose political weight—after the October Revolution Lenin always rejected the idea of joining any tendency or faction—had been consciously applied to perform a balancing function (a reading of his *Testament* is sufficient proof of this).

In this situation the constitution of a faction within the party's highest leading body represented an ever more substantial element of power. Added to this was the reinforcement of the function of general secretary of the party, which Stalin vastly expanded, and the use he made of it through the general practice of appointment from above, in gradually creating a network of leaders bound to him.

Poor health and a series of tactical considerations—among them the hope that Lenin might recover and conduct the battle against Stalin and the emerging bureaucracy of which he had given advance notice—kept Trotsky for a certain period from waging an open fight against Stalin and the Troika. It was for this reason that Trotsky at the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923 refrained from attacking Stalin at his weakest point—his position on the national question with regard to Georgia.

However, the domestic and international situation raised new problems and brought about a sharpening of the differences within the party. On October 8, Trotsky wrote a letter to the central committee criticizing the orientation of the politburo majority. On October 15, the debate broadened with the publication of a letter, signed by forty-six party leaders, which demanded reintroduction of full internal democracy and the calling of a special party congress. Among the signatories were such outstanding figures as Preobrazhensky, Piatakov, Antonov-Ovseenko, Smirnov, and Muralov.

The Troika reacted quite violently. An enlarged central committee session voted a motion of censure against Trotsky for his letter and condemned the declaration of the forty-six as a factional act. Since Trotsky was ill, he was unable to take part in that session. On December 15, *Pravda* published a polemical article by Stalin against Trotsky. On the same day, in a meet-

ing of Petrograd party functionaries, Zinoviev attacked Trotsky — hypocritically regretting the fact that he did so in his absence — and was the first to introduce the term “Trotskyism” into the polemics.

In the meantime, the politburo majority — to which Bukharin was drawing close — tried formal concessions. It approved a resolution for a “new course” in the party, which was to consist of a return to workers’ democracy and recruitment of new worker-cadres to counterbalance the weight of nonproletarian elements.¹⁷ Trotsky, although he was still ill and in fact forced to leave Moscow on the advice of doctors, strove to give a more coherent character to the polemics and published a series of articles later collected into a pamphlet entitled *The New Course*.

The publication of *The New Course* marked the beginning of a great political struggle by the Left Opposition, the outcome of which is known. The political leitmotifs which underlay this struggle deserve a thorough reexamination in the light of the documents, especially by the new generations. They concerned political problems and events in the USSR and in the international workers’ movement — from the situation in Germany to the Second Chinese Revolution, from the battle for planning to that against the concept of socialism in one country, from the problems of party democracy to those of the structure of the Soviet state — whose political and ideological implications regain their vivid contemporaneity as debate on such questions revives in the workers’ movement. The struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition in the USSR helped politically and ideologically to arm the international vanguard on a series of fundamental questions.

What were the causes that promoted the victory of the bureaucratic tendency? In answering this question (I can obviously only deal with this question within the limits of this article and for a more profound study I refer my readers to the contributions made by many Marxist scholars, first of all Trotsky), I must at the outset reject two positions.

The first position to be rejected is that presently proposed by those who, after having been compromised by Stalinism, made a rapid about-face on the occasion of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and accepted the so-called de-Stalinization line. According to these, the creation of a repressive apparatus in the USSR was a harsh but unavoidable necessity for building socialism, and the defeat of the Left Opposition was the necessary and therefore inevitable elimination of that part of the party which did not understand this need.

I will pass over a series of arguments against the positions of these neo-Stalinists (the basis of which is clearly a justifica-

tion of their role in the Stalin period, as even the most superficial analysis reveals) and limit myself to one basic observation. A whole number of economic problems currently on the order of the day in the USSR, from the problems in agriculture to the so-called Liberman reforms, demonstrate that the economic development produced by collectivization and planning has not been accelerated but rather seriously impeded by bureaucratic methods and the policy of the Stalinist leadership. Thus the Soviet successes in the economic field have not been achieved as a result of Stalinism but *despite* it.

Moreover, the claim that repression and coercion were indispensable in order to achieve these economic advances robs the workers' movement of one of the fundamental arguments of Marxism: its critique of capitalism as a system incapable of fully utilizing productive potentials because the logic of its coercive apparatus in the places of work and in society at large blocks the fully conscious contribution by the proletariat to the productive process. The position that the Cuban leaders, indirectly polemicizing against the present Soviet formulations, have taken in favor of moral incentives in their economy touches on one of the aspects of this problem and again poses it for consideration in reference to a concrete and present-day situation.

The second position to be rejected is that errors by Trotsky and the Left Opposition were in a more or less important degree or even decisively responsible for the defeat of the antibureaucratic wing. I naturally intend to concern myself chiefly with those among the supporters of this thesis who exhibit at least a modicum of seriousness—not those who have reached or been forced to conclusions analogous to those of the Trotskyist movement but refuse to join the Fourth International, and who often give birth to new organizations and new publications and then tend to justify their separation from the organized Trotskyist movement by advancing fanciful criticisms of Trotsky's role and the policy of the Fourth International.

In his biography of Trotsky, Isaac Deutscher in several places stresses certain tactical errors committed by Trotsky and his associates: Trotsky's refusal of the vice-chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars; his reluctance to attack Stalin on the national question at the Twelfth Congress; his hesitations in allying himself with Zinoviev and Kamenev; his opposition to Stalin's demagogic proposal in October 1927 to reduce the workday to seven hours (Stalin utilized the positions of the Trotskyists to accuse them before the workers of opposing measures to raise the standard of living).

Deutscher also pointed out that some of the questions on

which the clash between the opposition and the bureaucratic group took place, such as the theory of socialism in one country, were almost incomprehensible to the party rank and file since they involved theoretical arguments at a level too high for the overwhelming majority of the rank-and-file cadres. Thus it was easy for Stalin to distort the opposition's arguments and present them in a false light; this was all the more true since the opposition's voice was then scarcely audible in the party and most of its ideas were made known through the exposition of them made by the bureaucratic group.

It would be absurd to claim that Trotsky and the Left Opposition did not commit tactical errors, but this is not the essential point. What must be ascertained is the nature of any such errors and their importance in the unfolding process. It is clear that some of the tactical errors attributed to Trotsky can be so considered only by virtue of hindsight. I need only recall that Trotsky, like Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders, although concerned with the emergence of the bureaucratic phenomenon, could not predict its extent—above all, since no historical precedents existed for a phenomenon like that which was to develop in the USSR. Criticisms of this sort were advanced by Left Opposition groups in the USSR, not only against Trotsky but also against Lenin,¹⁸ who was accused of having helped Stalin's game along by the introduction at the Tenth Congress of measures limiting party democracy.

On this question, it suffices to bring out the fact that the measures restricting and later eliminating party democracy (in the ascendant phase of Stalinism) were the effect rather than the cause of the establishment of bureaucratic dominance. In any case, these measures cannot be evaluated otherwise than in connection with the dialectical interaction among all the objective and subjective factors which promoted the development of the bureaucracy.

From the Marxist standpoint, the error would be to give primary importance to the subjective elements (tactical errors) in explaining the causes of the liquidation of the revolutionary opposition in the USSR¹⁹—just as it would be absurd to blame the delay in building a revolutionary party solely on tactical errors by the revolutionary vanguard groups functioning today in various countries.

Such a position cannot explain a fact that is in itself significant: In the central committee elected at the Twelfth Party Congress, of a total of forty, Trotsky could count on only three members besides himself—Rakovsky, Radek and Piatakov. Only a few months after the beginning of the division in the polit-

buro, Trotsky's support in the leading bodies was already extremely reduced. No tactical errors, however gross, could have caused such a failure.

In reality, the rise to power of the Stalin tendency came in an economic and social context—both national and international—which caused the birth of the bureaucracy and favored its development and reinforcement.

"The growth of the economic and political pressure of the bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois strata within the country, on the basis of defeats of the proletarian revolution in Europe and Asia—that was the historic chain which tightened around the neck of the Opposition during these four years. Whoever fails to understand this," Trotsky wrote, "understands nothing at all."²⁰

Stalin's positions, even the most aberrant, therefore found a fertile ground in the development of the social forces which constructed their "ideology" on the basis of those positions. "Slander becomes a force only when it meets a historical demand."²¹

Does this by chance mean that the struggle of the Left Opposition was futile and useless? Such a viewpoint is likewise alien to Marxism. Trotsky fought vigorously against the positions of those members of the opposition who capitulated to Stalin, stressing the process of demoralization at the root of such attitudes. Refusing to fight, even under unfavorable conditions, produces a further weakening of capacities for resistance as the process being combated develops.

Furthermore, the struggle of the opposition had a value that cannot be appreciated solely in the context of a specific period and specific situation in the USSR—a value of which the Russian Trotskyists, trained to take an international view of the struggle, were quite conscious. Their struggle helped prevent the demoralization of those cadres in other countries who were conducting a similar fight and who constituted the first nuclei of a new revolutionary force.

And in the Soviet Union itself, this struggle without any doubt contributed decisively to salvaging the conquests of October by alerting communist opinion in time to the dangers of their erosion as a result of the Stalin-Bukharin course from 1923 to 1927. Had it not been for the opposition's campaign against the elimination of the state monopoly of foreign trade and against return of the land to private ownership, it is probable that the leading faction would have consummated these measures. Had it not been for the opposition's agitation against the threat of polarization in the countryside and for planned, accelerated industrialization, it is probable that the leading

faction would have been totally disarmed in 1927-28 when it was abruptly confronted with a producers' strike by the kulaks.

Now, thanks chiefly to these lessons and the formulations made by the Left Opposition in the course of intensely difficult struggles, the most advanced sectors of the workers' movement are conscious of the mortal danger represented by bureaucracy. An example of this is the struggle which the Cuban revolutionary leadership is conducting against bureaucratism, demonstrating in this area also that it bases itself on the best traditions of revolutionary Marxism.

III. The USSR Under Stalin

The political isolation of the Russian Revolution following the failure of the revolutionary attempts in Europe and China, the numerical and cultural weakness of the Soviet proletariat and the enormous specific weight of the peasants, the weakening of the Communist Party through the great losses of cadres suffered during the civil war—all these factors constituted the principal causes of the consolidation of the rule of a bureaucratic caste in the USSR, which, under Stalin's leadership, politically expropriated the proletariat.

After the consolidation of bureaucratic power, the USSR retained only the social bases created by the October Revolution; its political structure changed radically from what it had been in Lenin's time, even in the most difficult times of the civil war.

"The monstrous growth of the state, the most totalitarian police dictatorship in history; the pitiless crushing of the proletariat; the choking off of all intellectual freedom, the renewal of national oppression; the new rise of the Orthodox Church; the restoration of the slavery of women, 'equal' to man only in order to sweat in the mines or the yards; the introduction of compulsory labor on a gigantic scale—all this certainly constitutes an enormous regression from the Soviet democracy of the first years of the revolution."²²

The suppression of all forms of honest information on the situation inside the USSR and the exclusive dissemination of controlled news for apologetic purposes made it difficult for a long time to construct a precise and detailed picture of the USSR under Stalin. The nonbourgeois sources of information were largely constituted by materials collected and published by Trotsky in the *Bulletin of the Opposition* and by the reports of opposition militants who succeeded in escaping from the USSR; the latter furnished interesting accounts of their factual experiences, aside, naturally, from their often unacceptable political conclusions.²³

After the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, the sources of information on the Stalin period were enriched by new documentation. Khrushchev's secret speech to the delegates was by no means one of these new sources of information, since the denunciations contained in it refer to facts and situations already only too well known to the revolutionary vanguards.²⁴ What gave this document its explosive character was the fact that for the first time such denunciations came from what might be called an "official" rostrum and were disseminated throughout the entire workers' movement, both inside and outside the USSR.

It is not unprofitable, however, to review the content of these denunciations:

— Party congresses and central committee meetings were held less and less frequently.

— Of the 139 full and candidate members of the party central committee elected at the Seventeenth Party Congress, ninety-eight, or 70 per cent, were arrested and shot, mainly between 1937 and 1938.

— Of 1,966 delegates with deliberative or consultative vote at the Seventeenth Party Congress, 1,108 were arrested for antirevolutionary crimes.

— ". . . honest Communists were slandered, accusations against them were fabricated, and revolutionary legality was gravely undermined." "The number of those arrested for counterrevolutionary crimes increased tenfold between 1936 and 1937." Expulsions from the party were executed "through the brutal abuse of the party statutes." The cases of so-called spies and saboteurs were concocted; the confessions "were obtained by means of cruel and inhuman tortures."

— The repressions weakened the USSR's defense against the attack by Nazi Germany. The role attributed to Stalin in the war was "completely unwarranted."²⁵ Stalin rejected reports of an imminent attack and concentrated in his hands the leadership of the war, which he conducted with extreme incompetence. The speech specifically pointed out that "Stalin planned operations on a globe."²⁶

— "Mass deportations from their native places of whole nations, together with all Communists and Komsomols, without any exception";

— ". . . The party and Soviet resolutions . . . were prepared in a routine manner, often without considering the concrete situation."

— The policy of heavy taxation of the peasants: Khrushchev cites the proposal to raise the tax burden of collectivized peasants to 40 billion rubles, "a sum which the Kolkhoz workers

did not realize for all the products which they sold to the Government."

The "explosive" character of Khrushchev's secret speech was accentuated by the fact that it alluded to documents like the famous *Testament* and other letters of Lenin, whose existence had been hidden from the members of the party for many years. From that time on, documents theretofore "restricted" began to be accessible to an ever wider number of militants in the workers' movement, and they began to pose for themselves in ever clearer terms the problem of understanding Stalinism from a political and social standpoint. I find it impossible, however, in the limits of this article to deal with the question of the social character of the USSR and the consequences of Stalinism in this realm, and I recommend to my readers the abundant literature which Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement have produced on this problem.²⁷

The crimes of Stalinism, the profound deformations and degeneration which it produced in the Soviet state, the creation of a bureaucratic caste which politically expropriated the proletariat and accumulated considerable privileges, all these aspects of the bureaucratic dictatorship established in the USSR—which the Trotskyists were the first to expose and also the first to struggle against—cannot obscure the basic fact that the productive relations established by the October Revolution remain and that the social character of the USSR is still that of a workers' state, even though of a "degenerated" type. This is the basis of the position always maintained by Trotsky and the international Trotskyist movement of defending the USSR, which has meant defending the social bases created by the October Revolution.

The bureaucratic caste which currently rules the USSR is a social stratum which originated from a workers' state and whose power and privileges are intimately bound up with the existence of this workers' state, just as the survival and privileges of the bureaucracies in the Communist parties and the trade unions outside the Soviet bloc are closely tied to the existence of their organizations.

It is from this aspect that the dual character of the bureaucracy derives. On the one hand, it fears the working masses, whose return to political power would mean the end of its privileges and, in the last analysis, its destruction; on the other hand, it fears capitalism, both as a tendency inside the USSR.²⁸ (as long as there were concrete dangers of the restoration of the old social regime) and abroad, and as an element of permanent social conflict which no "coexistence" policy can eliminate.

When it is seriously threatened by imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy strives in its own manner to mobilize the masses to repel the danger. When the workers' movement is on the ascendant, however, it tries to prevent the struggle from leading to revolutionary outbreaks by keeping rein on the workers' leaders, by proposing objectives which channel the potential of the struggle toward reformist outlets, and by seeking agreements and compromises with imperialism behind the backs of the workers' leaderships.

Especially since the second imperialist war, this has been the chief and foremost policy followed by the Soviet bureaucracy. From the compromise of Yalta and Potsdam to the Caribbean crisis in 1962 and the Vietnamese revolution, the basis of the Soviet leadership's international orientation has been the need to prevent the struggling peoples in the underdeveloped countries and the working-class struggles in the advanced capitalist countries from imposing on it a choice which, because of its bonapartist nature, it seeks to evade. The choice is either to give decisive support to revolutionary struggles, thereby producing a crisis in its whole system of relationships with the capitalist countries and colonial bourgeoisies, or to refuse political and material support to revolutionary movements, thereby exposing itself to attacks and dangerous ruptures in the international workers' movement, as well as in the Soviet working class.

IV. The "Peaceful Coexistence" Policy

Shortly after the seizure of power, the Leninist leadership set the Soviet state's foreign policy firmly on the line of proletarian internationalism. At every crucial moment in the course of Soviet foreign policy—from Lenin's decree on peace of October 26, 1917, and thereafter—the position of the Bolshevik leaders was always that the problem of capitalist encirclement had to be solved by extending the revolution to other countries. On the occasion of the debates over the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, Lenin stated: "If we believe that the German movement can develop immediately in the event of a breakoff in the peace talks, then we must sacrifice ourselves, because the German revolution will be much stronger than ours. . . . For us it is important to hold firm until the general socialist revolution manifests itself, and we can achieve this only by concluding peace."²⁹ This position was shared by all the members of the central committee.³⁰

Even the so-called problem of "exporting revolution" was

seen by the Bolshevik leaders in the context of this general political line. Their viewpoint had nothing in common with the position of the present Soviet leadership. Obscuring the real terms of the problem, the latter is conducting a polemic against "exporting revolution," which is conceived in an artificial and mechanical way, in order to put over a policy of substantially denying support to any revolutionary struggle and of playing a utopian and senseless balancing role between imperialism and the insurgent masses.

To give an idea of the real position of the Bolshevik leaders on the question of "exporting revolution," one need only mention their views which emerged on the occasion of the Russo-Polish war of 1920. In that instance, none of the Bolshevik leaders denied the necessity for the young Soviet state being able to put the Red Army at the service of revolutions in other countries. The difference was over the application of this policy to the situation that had developed in Poland. Lenin and Tukhachevsky, maintaining that the Polish workers and peasants would welcome the Red Army as liberators, favored pressing the war against Pilsudski to an invasion of Polish territory. Trotsky and Radek, on the other hand, held that to advance on Warsaw without making the Poles a peace offer would strengthen Pilsudski's position; since czarist oppression was still too recent a factor, Pilsudski would be able to play on Polish national feelings. The facts proved Trotsky right. However, above and beyond the polemics provoked on this occasion, what must be stressed is that this discussion was concerned with the analysis of a concrete situation and not a basic line. On this, I repeat, there was general agreement.

The shift in foreign policy from the proletarian-internationalist to the "peaceful coexistence" line—which came long before the Khrushchev "theories"—meant a different kind of relationship to the capitalist-dominated world and a different strategy toward it. The line of proletarian internationalism viewed the Soviet state as *one element* in the world revolution; and thus it stressed as a fundamental and permanent feature of this state's foreign policy its relationship with the international proletariat in the context of the worldwide struggle against capitalism. The "peaceful coexistence" line, however, as its name implies, stressed a foreign policy based essentially on the relationship between the USSR and the capitalist states.

The reversal of this fundamental line was the logical consequence of the process that unfolded in the USSR following the triumph of the bureaucratic tendency and its theory of "socialism in one country." The USSR was no longer to serve

the world revolution and the international working class even at the cost of sacrificing itself, as Lenin had said; on the contrary the international workers' movement was to serve the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy and be subordinated to its every turn.

Much ink has been spilled on the significance, the implications, and the validity of "peaceful coexistence." But a priori assertions and claims notwithstanding, the validity of a policy must be tested in practice. And it is precisely in this sphere that the declarations accompanying expositions of this theory have shown themselves to be empty pretenses. Take for example the claim that peaceful coexistence would mean that while revolution would not be exported, counterrevolution would not be exported either.³¹ In a whole series of countries, and most importantly in Vietnam, American imperialism has been and is developing its role as the policeman of international capitalism. How valid is the assertion that "counterrevolution must not be exported" in these situations, and how has this declaration been applied, for example, in the policy of the Soviet leadership toward the American escalation in Vietnam?

The reality is that the Soviet bureaucracy's warnings and declarations notwithstanding, its policy is becoming clearer and clearer to the ruling circles in the United States. American policy-makers are ever more aware of the fact that the Soviet leadership's role is by no means one of fomenting or tenaciously defending revolutionary advances in the world, but, on the contrary, one of consciously inhibiting such developments. The imperialist leaders are conscious of the fact that revolutionary developments are being set in motion by forces eluding the control of the Soviet bureaucracy and that it is with these forces that they have to contend.

At the same time, the experience of the escalation, which began not in Vietnam but in the Caribbean crisis of 1962, increasingly strengthens the most extremist sections of the Pentagon and the imperialist political leadership. In these sectors the conviction is maturing that the USSR will remain passive in the face of further and more serious steps in the escalation, and they are preparing to push on to extremes to which even an opportunist leadership like that of the Soviet Union cannot fail to react. Thus, instead of representing a force for peace, "peaceful coexistence" has been a factor objectively encouraging dangerous adventures.

V. De-Stalinization

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU marked the beginning

of the phase of so-called de-Stalinization, whose implications quickly went beyond the confines of the Soviet Union and affected the other workers' states and the Communist movement in various countries.

The term "de-Stalinization" itself, and the still more "official" formula of denouncing the "cult of the personality" as the source of all ills, show the nature and limitations of such a course.

Khrushchev's secret speech to the delegates of the Twentieth Congress was planned with two basic objectives: (1) to win the support of the Soviet masses, to whom the most odious effects and aspects of the Stalin dictatorship had become unendurable; (2) to limit concessions to the masses insofar as possible to the realm of verbal denunciations and to secondary aspects and thus prevent the possibility that denunciations of the "cult of the personality" might be turned against the bureaucracy as a whole.

Thus, Khrushchev, seeking to forestall the question that would inevitably be raised, asked in his secret speech: "Why is it we see the truth of this matter only now and why did we not do something earlier, during Stalin's life, in order to save innocent lives?" And further on: "Some comrades may ask us: Where were the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee? Why did they not assert themselves against the cult of the individual in time?" Khrushchev's answer was at once embarrassed and not very convincing. He maintained that "... the majority of the Political Bureau members did not at that time know all of the circumstances in these matters and could not therefore intervene." The character of this reply and its absurdity are more than evident. How could it happen that the particulars of such massive repressions, which, moreover, were denounced by the opposition on numerous occasions, were unknown to the top party leaders?

His reply to the second question was more subtle and perhaps in substance more sincere. Stalin, Khrushchev said, "actively fought against the enemies of the Leninist theory and those who deviated"; as a result he "gained great popularity, sympathy and support" (among the bureaucracy, I might add). After having built a strong personal power through this struggle against "the Trotskyites" and "Zinoviev supporters," Stalin abused this power and "began to fight eminent party and government leaders and to use terrorist methods against honest Soviet people."

It is evident that as long as Stalin was murdering thousands upon thousands of oppositionist militants, he won the enthusias-

tic support of the various Khrushchevs and of the bureaucracy as a whole, consolidating a personal power which served this purpose excellently. Things started going badly, according to Khrushchev, only when Stalin began to persecute "eminent party and government leaders" and "honest people," that is, a part of the bureaucracy itself.

Hence the necessity that only such "eminent party and government leaders" be rehabilitated and that the struggle against "the cult of the personality" not assume the character either of a rehabilitation of the real revolutionaries (which the "de-Stalinizers" have carefully avoided for more than ten years) or that of an immediate, determined struggle against all those responsible for the crimes of Stalin. With this aim, Khrushchev called for caution on the formal aspect as well. "Many of us," he stated in the secret speech, "participated in the action of assigning our names to various towns, districts, enterprises, and *Kolkhozes*. We must correct this . . . But it should be done calmly and slowly . . . Thus if today we begin to remove signs everywhere, people will think that these comrades in whose honor the given enterprises, *kolkhozes* or cities are named also met some bad fate and that they have also been arrested."

The de-Stalinization line was thus the result of two contradictory needs of the bureaucracy: the need to prevent the start of a real process of regeneration and reinstitution of workers' democracy, on the one hand; and on the other, the need to give themselves the appearance of "liberalizers." Hence the necessity to strike down all forces which criticize the bureaucratic structure and methods and which even potentially express demands for the reintroduction of workers' democracy. Hence the repressions against certain tendencies and positions of the intellectuals which, while confined to the literary and artistic field, give evidence of a logical line of development and, within certain limits, are a cover for expressions of a political character.

The de-Stalinization phenomenon, however, must not be seen as a demagogic "maneuver" by the bureaucracy. It has very deep roots and causes which must be understood in order to grasp the meaning of the developments following—and to a certain extent those immediately preceding—the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. One of its root causes is the disappearance of the objective bases of the bureaucracy's power, that is, of the fundamental conditions under which it developed and which enabled the Kremlin to control the various Communist parties (the worldwide recession of revolution, the USSR's isolation and its economic, political, and cultural backwardness, the

small numerical weight of the proletariat with respect to the peasantry).

Khrushchev's "reformist" maneuvers must be understood in the context of this development: As a result of the political weakening of the bureaucracy it becomes necessary for it to base itself more and more not on terror and repression but on concessions to the masses which can secure it a minimum of support or neutrality from the decisive sectors of the population.

However such concessions can be made only insofar as they do not affect the political essence of the bureaucratic regime and do not challenge its existence. And that is the limit beyond which not only de-Stalinization but any "reformist" undertaking on the part of the bureaucracy cannot go. Underlying de-Stalinization is the contradiction between the development of economic organization in the USSR and the political and cultural lag. This contradiction—in which lies the historic death sentence of the bureaucratic regime—releases forces which are inimical to the bureaucracy and which will destroy it.

The illusory nature of the bureaucracy's "reformist" undertakings is demonstrated by the events that followed the Twentieth Congress. In other workers' states, the forces the bureaucracy sought to bottle up and control exploded and forced the Soviet leadership to doff its mask of "liberalizer." In Hungary, in the face of the rising mass movement, every maneuver was in vain, and the ultimate recourse was tanks. In Poland the Poznan strike of June 1956 led to the Polish October, whose political consequences the Soviet bureaucracy resisted to the last. In the USSR, faced with the pressure of broad layers of intellectuals, the bureaucrats are again resorting to excommunications and trials.

The de-Stalinization has released forces the bureaucracy is unable to control, except temporarily and at the cost of concessions. Such concessions afford it time but tend inexorably to reproduce on a broader scale the problems and contradictions the bureaucracy seeks to resolve. At the same time, a situation of political instability is developing, the inevitable consequence of the end of Stalin's dictatorship, which continually weakens the bureaucracy's control both inside the Soviet Union and with respect to the Communist parties of the other workers' states. The centrifugal processes in the bloc of workers' states, the clamorous fact of the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the emergence of additional tendencies and poles of attraction inside the international Communist movement (the Cuban tendency, the Chinese tendency, the Soviet tendency), are inevitable results of this situation.

In the Communist parties de-Stalinization by itself has not produced a revival of left opposition forces, above all in the working class, but in many cases it has created the conditions for such a development by breaking up monolithism. On the one hand, the weakened ties between the leaderships of the Communist parties and the Soviet leadership have favored right-wing tendencies whose aim is to present themselves to the petty bourgeoisie as "democratic" and "national" parties. On the other hand, the breakup of monolithism in the relations among the parties and the workers' states, and the political differentiation resulting from it, have exposed the memberships of the various Communist parties to debate over the different positions taken by each party on international questions. Therefore, the breakup of monolithism in the relations among the parties produces and promotes differences which inexorably tend to be reflected inside each party.

It is from this point of view that one of the fundamental aspects of the struggle now going on inside the Chinese Communist Party must be confronted and understood. Despite the Chinese leaders' Stalinist professions of faith and all formal historical references and analogies to the situation of the Russian Communist Party in the period of the rise of the Stalinist tendency (the bureaucratic nature of the discussion, the curbs on free expression of tendencies, the distortion of opposing positions), the following difference must not be overlooked. Whereas the elimination of all possibility of expression by the oppositions during that period in the USSR foreshadowed the construction of Stalinist monolithism, the "cultural revolution" in the Chinese Communist Party is a phase in the breakup of this monolithism. It is a phase in a struggle which began among the top bureaucratic groups and has tended to be transmitted to the ranks of the party and to the student and worker masses; and it is taking place in the period of a general worldwide crisis of Stalinism.

The bureaucracy's power in the USSR put its imprint fundamentally on the superstructural level. It is the product of a *political* counterrevolution. Therefore, a *political* revolution is necessary to overthrow it. The forms and ways in which this revolution will come about will depend in the last analysis on the political context in which it materializes. The Fourth International has delineated the political bases of this process; in their general lines these constitute the program of struggle for the revolutionary nuclei which are forming and which will gather strength in the USSR and the workers' states to which this perspective refers. I will limit myself here to restating the

basic lines and I recommend the complete documents for a fuller understanding.³²

a) Freedom of organization for all parties which accept Soviet legality, that is, those which place themselves in the context of building the workers' state.

b) Genuine freedom of the press and assembly for all working-class tendencies supported by a legally established minimum of manual and intellectual workers.

c) The election and periodic reelection of the members of the central, provincial, and local legislative bodies by secret ballot with multiple candidates or lists representative of the various Soviet parties.

d) Limitation of the salaries of administrative officials to the level of the wage of a skilled worker.

e) Dissolution of all permanent secret police bodies and their replacement by workers' militias.

f) The necessity of force in relations between the proletariat and the class enemy; the exclusion of the latter from the relationships among the various Soviet parties and inside each Soviet party.

g) A fundamental distinction between the workers' state and the revolutionary party: they must not be merged nor should either be made subordinate to the other.

h) Democratic control of the party leaders by the ranks, with rigid observance of all the forms of democratic centralist procedure.

i) Democratic control of the state apparatus and the economic apparatus by the mass of the working people organized in soviets, factory councils, and unions.

j) Maximum information and maximum publicity for all controversial questions in the party, in the state bodies, and in the leading economic bodies.

k) The necessity that the revolutionary party actively support by propaganda and persuasion all the theses of Marxism and dialectical and historical materialism. The possibility of teaching these theories must be assured without the state's forcing the teachers or the youth to adopt and expound them exclusively.

l) No scientific, artistic, or cultural tendency which the revolutionary vanguard does not consider progressive or the most progressive should be the object of repression by administrative measures or be hindered in its productive or creative work.

The political revolution in the degenerated workers' states is a process in which both the revolutionary vanguards in the workers' states themselves and the international workers' movement are interested and to which both contribute. The accom-

plishment of that revolution in the last analysis will be the result of the action of all these forces. It will be a powerful impetus to the international workers' movement and to the anti-imperialist movement in general and will enormously strengthen, politically and economically, the workers' states in which it occurs.

Cuba's example is highly illustrative of the potential of a workers' state with a revolutionary leadership. Already the influence and prestige of the Castro leadership are an important factor of revolutionary reawakening in the entire workers' and anti-imperialist movement on a world scale. How many times will this force be multiplied when the enormous energies of the other workers' states are freed from their bureaucratically imposed fetters and added to the force of one small, economically weak workers' state?

NOTES

1 *The Essential Trotsky*, Unwin Books, London, 1963, pp. 150-151.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

3 In his essay, *The Lessons of October*, Trotsky noted: "It may be assumed as a general rule—we pointed this out as far back as the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern—that the force of the pre-October resistance of the bourgeoisie in old capitalist countries will generally be much greater than in our country; it will be more difficult for the proletariat to gain victory; but, on the other hand, the conquest of power will immediately secure for them a much more stable and firm position than we attained on the day after our October." (*The Essential Trotsky*, p. 166)

4 In "Better Fewer, But Better," Lenin wrote: "Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? . . .

"Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and America?

"I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle." (*Lenin's Last Letters and Articles*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, undated, pp. 56-57)

5 Quoted in Moshe Lewin, *Le Dernier Combat de Lénine*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1967, p. 127.

6 *Lenin's Last Letters and Articles*, p. 45.

7 "Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices." (*Ibid.*, p. 52)

8 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

9 Trotsky pointed out several times the continuity between his position and Lenin's with respect to the bureaucracy. Cf. for example, Trotsky's speech to the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, which was published in the *International Socialist Review*, Fall 1965.

10 *Lenin's Last Letters and Articles*, pp. 5-22 (or in *Collected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1960, XXXVI).

11 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

14 Quoted by Moshe Lewin, *Le Dernier Combat de Lénine*, p. 27.

15 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 25.

16 In the discussion on the motion, Riazanov presented the following amendment: "The congress condemns factionalism most vigorously and at the same time, with equal vigor, declares its opposition to election to the party congress on a programmatic basis." Lenin rejected this amendment in these words: "I think that Comrade Riazanov's desire unfortunately is not realizable. If fundamental disagreements exist on a question, we cannot deprive the members of the central committee of the right of appeal to the party. I absolutely do not see how we can do that. This congress cannot in any way or in any form decide the elections for the next congress. And if, for example, questions like that of the Brest Litovsk Peace were raised? Can we guarantee that such questions will not be raised? No, that cannot be guaranteed. It is possible therefore that in a case of this sort it will be necessary to proceed to elections on a programmatic basis. This is quite clear" (From the minutes of the Tenth Congress, quoted in *Dai Processi di Mosca alla Caduta di Krushev* [From the Moscow Trials to the Fall of Khrushchev], Edizioni Bandiera Rossa, Rome, 1965, p. 207-208. See also *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1956; and *Le Dossier de la Déstalinization*, Paris, 1956.)

17 The first measure was not put into effect. The second consisted of admitting a considerable number of poorly politicalized elements into the party, which broadened Stalin's basis for maneuver.

18 See, for example, the positions taken by Ante Ciliga in his book *Il Paese della Menzogna e dell' Enigma* (The Country of Falsehood and Enigma), Edizioni Casini, 1951.

19 Although often citing tactical errors by Trotsky, Deutscher rejected this position, of which, in fact, he accuses Trotsky (in my opinion wrongly) in discussing his *History of the Russian Revolution* (cf. *The Prophet Outcast*, Chap. 3). Cf. in this regard the article by W. F. Warde, "The Importance of the Individual in History-Making," in the *International Socialist Review*, Winter 1965.

20 *The Third International After Lenin*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1957, p. 163.

21 *My Life*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1931, p. 516.

22 From the resolution "The USSR and Stalinism" at the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948, in *The Fourth International*, June 1948.

23 Cf., for example, Ciliga, op. cit.; Victor Serge, *From Lenin to Stalin*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1937; and *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, Oxford, 1963.

24 The Twentieth Congress, however, constituted a confirmation of the validity of the Trotskyist positions. After having slandered and persecuted the Trotskyists, the Soviet bureaucracy itself was forced by the situation that had developed in the USSR to denounce a part of its own misdeeds, making Stalin the sole scapegoat. The very term "Stalinism," which till 1956 had been adopted only by the Trotskyists, came into general use throughout the workers' movement.

25 See in this regard the minutes of the debate between officials of the General Staff and Soviet historians which took place at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC of the CPSU, published first by *La Sinistra* (October 1966) and reprinted by *World Outlook* (November 11, 1966).

26 In the light of this denunciation, the position expressed by Trotsky and known under the name of the "Clemenceau Thesis" seems still more concrete and farsighted. While it reaffirmed the necessity of unconditional defense of the USSR against class enemies, it maintained the need in case of war of continuing the struggle against the bureaucratic leadership in the attempt to take over leadership of the war and give the struggle against the enemy a course which the bureaucratic leadership could never assure. (For the most complete exposition of this position and for a report on the polemic which it aroused in the USSR, see also I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, Ch. 5, pp. 349 ff.)

27 See primarily Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, *The Third International After Lenin*, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, and *Les Crimes de Staline*. See also the documents of the Fourth International which have been published in Italy in the volume *Dai Processi di Mosca alla Caduta di Krusciov*.

28 For example, the turn effected by the Stalin leadership in 1928 with the liquidation of the kulaks and the NEP "neobourgeois," the forced collectivization of agriculture, and the industrialization at breakneck speed.

29 The minutes of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of January 11, 1918, published in *Les Bolcheviks et la Révolution d'Octobre*, Maspero, 1964, p. 239.

30 From the minutes of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) of January 11, 1918: "Comrade Sergheev (Artem) stressed that all the speakers agreed that our socialist republic is threatened with death if a socialist revolution does not come about in the West. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 240)

31 "Peaceful coexistence implies . . . recognition of the right of every people to solve all the problems of their country by themselves . . . Peaceful coexistence . . . facilitates the struggle of the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries for their liberation" (*Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Adopted at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU October 31, 1961*, Cross Currents Press, New York, 1961, p. 64).

"A détente in international relations and peaceful coexistence . . . mean that the struggle for these objectives must be conducted excluding both the perspective of a new world war and the possibility of direct foreign interventions to 'export' either counterrevolution or revolution" (from the political resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Italian Communist party, December 1962).

32 The document most concerned with this problem is "The Decline and Fall of Stalinism," approved at the Fifth World Congress of the Fourth International (October 1957).

4. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

By Ross Dowson

For the Bolsheviks November 7, 1917, represented not only the successful seizure of power by the proletariat, supported by the peasantry, in Russia. It was the beginning; it placed at the top of the historical agenda the world socialist revolution.

No section of the Second International was more imbued with the spirit of internationalism than the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. As adherents of Marxism, all the parties making up the Second International were formally, if not firmly, committed to aid by every possible means the struggles of the workers and oppressed of other lands. They envisaged the achievement of power in their own countries reaching fruition only through the world revolution, which would establish a socialist commonwealth comprising all the advanced sectors of the globe.

The catechism worked out by the youthful Frederick Engels in his notes for the preliminary draft of the *Communist Manifesto* expressed what was commonly understood about the universal scope of the struggle for socialism. To question No. 19, "Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?" he answered, "No!"

The cocreator of scientific socialism went on to say: "By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. Further, it has coordinated the social development of the civilized countries to such an extent that in all of them bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day. It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all civilized countries, that is to say, at least in England, America, France and Germany.

"It will develop in each of these countries more or less rapidly according as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces. Hence, it will go slowest and will meet most obstacles in Germany, most rapidly and with the fewest difficulties in England. It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world and will radically alter the course of development which they have followed up to now, while greatly stepping up its pace. It is a universal revolution and will accordingly have a universal range."

To this classical Marxist position, the Bolsheviks added a supplementary concept: the revolution developing in underdeveloped Russia could not overcome with its own forces and resources and within its own national borders the problems of economic backwardness inherited from czarism, in particular the agrarian problem.

Thus Lenin wrote in 1905 that the Russian revolutionists, standing on the shoulders of a whole series of revolutionary generations in Europe, have the right to "dream" that they will succeed in "achieving with a completeness never before seen the whole democratic transformation, of all of our minimum program . . . and if that succeeds . . . then the revolutionary conflagration will set fire to Europe . . . The European worker will rise in his turn and show us 'how it is done'; then the revolutionary rising of Europe will have a retroactive effect upon Russia and the epoch of several revolutionary years will become an epoch of several revolutionary decades."

Thanks to recurring and extended periods of exile, no other set of leaders within the Second International, save the Poles, was better acquainted with the problems confronting the international working-class movement than the Russians. This was true not only of those with long-standing participation in the Bolshevik faction but of those who joined the Bolsheviks during 1917 to form that galaxy of leaders whose names were to become renowned the world over. With the exception of Stalin, the top leaders were all conversant with the most complex issues under debate in the international socialist movement. Many participated in the political life of the countries where they were compelled to reside and made significant contributions, as, for example, Trotsky did in the formative stage of American Communism.

The Bolsheviks were both Russian and world revolutionists. For them there was no essential separation between their national

revolution and the world struggle for socialism; the two were inextricably united.

The Second International, constituted under the guidance of Frederick Engels as the continuation of the First, was part and parcel of their own movement. This is one reason why in August 1914 Lenin could scarcely bring himself to believe that the copy of *Vorwärts* reporting the vote of the German social-democratic deputies for the war credits of the Kaiser's military machine was other than a forgery. The Russian revolutionists had known serious defeats at the hands of the more powerful class enemy, but had never encountered such a blatant betrayal as that committed by the largest banner-bearer of the International.

Lenin and his associates were not unacquainted with the weakening of the revolutionary fiber of some of the leading parties and party leaders of the Second International. As early as 1906, for example, Trotsky had noted: "The work of propaganda and organization among the proletariat . . . has its own intrinsic inertia. The Socialist parties of Europe—in the first place, the most powerful of them, the German Socialist party—have developed a conservatism of their own, which grows in proportion as socialism embraces ever larger masses, and organization and discipline increase. Social Democracy, personifying the political experience of the proletariat, can, therefore, at a certain juncture, become an immediate obstacle in the way of an open proletarian conflict with the bourgeois reaction. In other words, the conservatism of a proletarian party in limiting itself to propaganda, can at a certain moment, impede the direct struggle of the proletariat for power."

Despite his temporary disbelief, Lenin's response was incisive once the news of the betrayal by the social-democratic right wing and centrists was confirmed. He pronounced the death of the Second International in the same breath that he declared, "Long live the Third International!" While other heads of the social-democracy across the world, except for a scattering of individuals, succumbed to the fumes of chauvinism, Lenin and Zinoviev, residing in a Galician village and cut off from their own party, proclaimed the need for the Third International.

The world socialist ranks were in shambles as the leaderships of the major parties in the contending imperialist camps acted to pit the workers of their respective countries against one another. Only the Bolshevik nucleus stood firm behind the

slogan, "Workers of the world, unite." The idea of the Third International was launched under the most unpropitious circumstances when there seemed little prospect for any revival of the revolutionary working-class movement, let alone a successful socialist revolution.

The Russian Marxists conceived of the new International as first and foremost a program. This was the program of class opposition, discarded and trampled in the mud and gore by the Second International. It had to be rescued and upheld at all costs, so that the necessary forces could again be won to its side.

The first significant step along that line was taken by the conference held at Zimmerwald, Switzerland, in September 1915. Out of this modest gathering of representatives of the socialist left from eleven countries came the first international declaration against the imperialist slaughter—the celebrated *Zimmerwald Manifesto* written by Trotsky. At that conference only the delegation around Lenin was firmly for a Third International. By the next year, at the Kienthal conference, twelve of the forty-three participants favored a new International and another seven were inclined in that direction.

The Bolshevik pioneers were not primarily concerned with counting the number of cothinking groups or their respective memberships, but their readiness to rebuild the international movement on principled foundations. To Lenin the collapse of the Second International signaled the bankruptcy of opportunism, reformism, and petty-bourgeois socialism. The Third International was to be regarded as a reality which was already taking up where the Second left off. The lessons derived from the Bolsheviks' experiences of 1903, 1905, and 1917 gave the new International a program and a system of strategical, tactical, and organizational methods.

While the First Congress of the Third International was not to take place until two years after the conquest of power in November 1917, that event was the first and most fundamental victory of the new International. The working masses throughout the world were inspired by the heroic example set by the Russian people under the Bolshevik leadership. Immense waves of solidarity swept over war-exhausted Europe which restricted and then frustrated the imperialist efforts to strangle the workers' republic at birth. The European masses were aroused to shake off the stupor imposed by the capitalists with the aid of the

social-democrats, and they engaged in a series of attempts to settle accounts with their own rulers.

The revolutionary fervor and ferment spread across the Atlantic and reached as far as Seattle in the United States and the prairie provinces of Canada. The Western Labor Conference held in Calgary, Alberta, in the spring of 1919, composed of 239 delegates representing 41,150 western Canadian trade unionists (including eight central labor bodies), sent greetings to the first workers' state as well as to the revolutionary forces in Germany assembled under the banner of Luxemburg and Liebknecht. They demanded that Canadian interventionist troops be withdrawn from Russian soil. They passed resolutions expressing support to the idea of soviet power and acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Within months they provided the backbone for the general strike that put Winnipeg under the control of an assembly which coalesced around the labor council and which ruled that city for forty-one days.

Throughout 1918 the army of the world socialist revolution was mobilizing. The Bolsheviks were summoning it into action. Major European detachments were already locked in combat. There was imperative need for a general staff to head a world party of socialist revolution, to work out its strategy, tactics, and methods of organization, to guide it to victory. There could be no delay; the Third International had to be established.

Its First Congress was held in Moscow, March 2-6, 1919. It was attended by representatives of revolutionary contingents from nineteen countries. Hard pressed by their internal problems, the Bolsheviks nevertheless assigned their top leaders and allotted considerable resources to its work. The Communist groups forming in numerous lands, composed of the most stalwart elements that had broken away from the Second International, along with new revolutionary forces, overcame great obstacles in order to participate in the founding deliberations and decisions.

They debated on an equal footing with the Russian leaders, whose internationalism recognized that the interests of the world movement took precedence over the movement in any one country, including their own. The first four congresses discussed the specific problems confronting the forces of socialist revolution in the various countries and worked out major position papers on parliamentary action, the united front, the national

question, the state and the proletarian dictatorship, and other questions. The programmatic documents they adopted remain to this day precious acquisitions of revolutionary socialism.

The task of building a general staff of the world revolution turned out to be far more difficult than even the soberest minds then conceived. The new Communist organizations had barely begun to take shape when the postwar revolutionary upsurge began to subside. An integral part of this process was the increasing exhaustion of the Russian masses, which facilitated the descent of the Russian Revolution and the gradual crystallization and consolidation of a conservative bureaucratic stratum in the Communist Party, the Soviet state, and the Comintern.

The first period of the Third International falls into two phases. In the upsurge following the 1917 revolution, the Bolsheviks viewed the working-class seizure of power as an imminent objective in Europe. Success in this endeavor was precluded by the absence of qualified revolutionary parties which could win over a decisive majority of the working masses.

This situation necessitated a shift in tactics at the Third World Congress in 1921, which called upon the Communist cadres to concentrate on gaining hegemony of the masses in preparation for a direct struggle for power in the near future.

Propelled forward by the triumph of the revolution in Russia, the new International was thrust back by defeats of the revolution in Germany, the key country on the European continent, from 1918 to 1923. In March 1920 the young Communist Party adventuristically tried to unleash a general offensive before the majority of the workers was ready to accept its lead. Then, during the Ruhr crisis in the fall of 1923, Zinoviev and Stalin restrained the German Communist leadership from taking advantage of the opportunity when the question of power was acutely posed.

These cruel defeats in Western Europe further strengthened the processes of bureaucratic backsliding in the Soviet Union, which were accelerated by Lenin's withdrawal from political activity as a result of his mortal illness. The ascending Soviet bureaucracy gave theoretical expression to its national narrow-mindedness and caste interests in the conception of "socialism in one country," newly minted at the end of 1924. This was the complete negation of the internationalist essence of Bolshevism.

Trotsky, whose aid Lenin had enlisted in his last struggle, continued the resistance against the encroaching bureaucracy

as leader of the Left Communist Opposition. But its efforts to promote a consistent internationalist line in world politics were unavailing. The Fifth Congress in 1924 sealed the bureaucracy's control over the Comintern apparatus. The Sixth Congress in 1928 marked the crushing of the Bolshevik wing and the purging of all dissidents from the leaderships of the Comintern. In many parties, as, for instance, the Greek, this involved the expulsion of almost the entire founding leadership.

The perspectives flowing from the theory of one-country socialism permeated the program drafted by Bukharin and submitted by Stalin to that congress for adoption. Trotsky's criticism of that program was never seen by the delegates. One copy, which accidentally came into possession of Maurice Spector and James P. Cannon, delegates from the Canadian and U. S. Communist parties, was smuggled out of the Soviet Union. Through its publication abroad the basic issues between the national-bureaucratic and internationalist tendencies in world communism were brilliantly illuminated.

In this polemic, which called upon the Comintern to return to the path of Marx and Lenin, Trotsky warned: "The new doctrine proclaims that socialism can be built on the basis of a national state—if only there is no intervention. From this there can and must follow (notwithstanding all pompous declarations in the draft program) a collaborationist policy towards the foreign bourgeoisie with the object of averting intervention, as this will guarantee the construction of socialism, that is to say, will solve the main historical question. The task of the parties in the Comintern assumes, therefore, an auxiliary character; their mission is to protect the USSR from intervention and not to fight for the conquest of power. It is, of course, not a question of subjective intentions but of the objective logic of political thought."

With equal insight and foresight, he observed: "If our internal difficulties, obstacles and contradictions which are fundamentally a reflection of world contradictions can be settled merely by the 'inner forces of our revolution' without entering the arena of the world-wide proletarian revolution, then the International is partly a subsidiary and partly a decorative institution, the Congress of which can be convoked once every four years, once every ten years, or perhaps not at all."

In fact, the Stalinern was to hold only one more congress. The first four congresses were held from 1919 to 1922. The next was held in 1924, the sixth in 1928—and the seventh was

not convened until 1935. It was to be the last. The Soviet bureaucracy had less and less respect and use for this relic of the revolutionary past.

From 1923 to 1933 every new revolutionary upsurge in Europe and Asia held open the possibility for regenerating the Third International and reversing its course. But all these opportunities were lost through the misleadership of the Stalin faction.

In the developments leading to the general strike of 1926, British Communism was gravely compromised and crippled by the Comintern's policy of preserving at all costs the Anglo-Russian Committee—a bloc between the British reformist union bureaucracy and the Soviet unions. Stalin covered up the betrayal when the British union leadership sold out the struggle, gagging the British Communists in order to keep the committee intact. It was broken up by the withdrawal of the union brass itself, as soon as they considered that most advantageous.

Most catastrophic was the debacle of Stalin's line in China from 1925 to 1927, where the CP was urged to submerge itself in the Kuomintang, the party of the national bourgeoisie. Chiang Kai-shek was elected an honorary member of the Executive of the Communist International. This course culminated in the bloody suppression of the Shanghai and Canton insurrections, which set the Chinese Revolution back for two decades.

Stalin's semi-Menshevik policies from 1924 to 1928 were succeeded by their opposite from 1929 to 1933. This "Third Period" saw the Comintern and its parties swing wildly into ultraleftism. The struggle for power was proclaimed to be everywhere at hand, regardless of circumstances. The social democracy was characterized as "social fascist" and listed as "the main danger." This attitude barred the Communists from seeking any form of united action with those working-class forces adhering to the Second International. This senseless policy in the face of the rising fascist danger led to catastrophe in Germany in 1933, where the Communist Party, with 600,000 members and a vote of six million, collapsed before Hitler's brown shirts without a fight.

The ignominious destruction of the largest Communist Party outside the Soviet Union and the failure of the Comintern and its constituent organizations to make any serious critical evaluation of the causes of this tragedy, spelled the end of the Third International as an instrument for socialist revolution. If the Second International had come to a bad end through base

treachery, the Third International foundered in utter political bankruptcy.

The Comintern still had a decade in which to drag out a lingering death agony, marked by a sequence of uninterrupted defeats for the working class promoted by its crassly opportunistic policies. The Seventh Congress met in July-August 1935 after the Soviet government had entered the League of Nations and concluded treaties of alliance with France and Czechoslovakia.

This diplomatic and military reorientation inaugurated the "People's Front" line by which those Communist parties in the capitalist democracies allied with the Kremlin ranged themselves on the side of their ruling classes. This open conversion of the Communist parties to national chauvinism, reformism, and coalition politics proved directly responsible for the sabotaging of the proletarian offensive culminating in the great sit-down strikes in France in 1936.

Its bitterest fruits were harvested with the strangling of the Spanish revolution where the CP leaders, complying with the mandates of the Comintern line, placed themselves at the service of private property and bourgeois power in the name of defending democracy against fascism. After Azaña formed the People's Front government in February 1936, the workers engaged in continuous strikes and the peasants began seizing the land. Spain was plunged into a hot revolutionary situation.

On July 17 the capitalist counterrevolution struck back. General Franco issued a manifesto from Spanish Morocco, urging the army and nation to join him and his junta in creating an authoritarian state.

As the panicky People's Front statesmen tried to parley with the fascists, the proletariat rose up and took matters into its own hands. In the first weeks after the civil war broke out, the workers and peasants set up their own councils and committees in the factories, shops, and villages, established their own police forces and courts, and organized their own militia.

It was possible to defeat the fascist onslaught, provided the civil war was conducted in a revolutionary manner on the basis of a socialist program which would have given power to the insurgent masses. For that it was essential to form soviets, purge the republican army of counterrevolutionary elements, apply a strategy of class struggle, give the land to the peasants, control of the factories to the workers, freedom to the Moroccans, and autonomy to the Basques and Catalonians.

The bourgeois coalition governments, with the participation of the Socialist, Communist, and Anarchist leaders and, at first, even the endorsement of the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM), dared do none of these things. On the contrary, they checked the extension of proletarian power, disarmed the workers and integrated their militias into the republican army, refused to legalize their possession of the factories, and protected the landlords against the peasants. Everything was done to deter the independent class action of the workers and keep them bound to the capitalist order.

When the POUM, which the Stalinists mislabeled "Trotskyist," left socialists, and revolutionary anarchists protested this reactionary course of the republican regime, they were crushed, slandered, imprisoned, and murdered.

While Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany rushed ample aid to Franco, the "democratic" imperialisms clamped a blockade around the Spanish Republic on the hypocritical pretext of "nonintervention." This policy was upheld by the Roosevelt administration in the United States, as well as by Blum's perfidious Popular Front government in France. The People's Front alliances of the workers' parties with the radical bourgeoisie, both above and below the Pyrenees, doomed the revolution and guaranteed Franco's victory. Thus the Third International and its obedient forces in Spain, which came to play a commanding role in the republican camp, acted as gravediggers of the most promising and powerful revolutionary upsurge of the decade.

These tragic events paved the way for Stalin's pact with Hitler, which unloosed the second world war.

After ravaging the Comintern, Stalin physically exterminated the entire Leninist general staff of the Russian Revolution, many of whom had played prominent parts in the history of the Third International. All the living members of Lenin's Politbureau, except Stalin himself, were framed up in the Moscow Trials and executed, some as agents of Hitler and the Mikado, others as accomplices of British imperialism, with Trotsky portrayed as the mastermind of the conspiracy. The sentence pronounced against Trotsky, who together with Lenin had presided over the formation of the Third International, was carried out in 1940, when he was assassinated by a Soviet agent.

After all that, nothing remained but to proclaim the Third International dead, and bury it. That final act was taken in

May 1943 with the formal dissolution of the Comintern in the midst of the second world war. This was Stalin's assurance to Churchill and Roosevelt that the Communist parties under his jurisdiction would not utilize any opportunities during or after the conflict to overthrow capitalism in the West. His followers faithfully fulfilled that pledge in Greece, Italy, France, and Belgium from 1943 to 1948.

The demise of the Third International signified the bankruptcy of the Soviet bureaucracy, its theory of socialism in one country, and its concomitant policies of class collaboration through "collective security" and "peaceful coexistence." But it did not mean the end of international organization by the working class. It is necessary to give world cohesion to workers of different tongues, different cultures, and of different stages of economic and political development. It is necessary to coordinate the different stages of the workers' movement into one united activity in order to make up for the heterogeneity of the world proletariat.

The international cannot be liquidated by the fiat of any head of state. It is an imperishable idea flowing from the nature of modern society and the need of the exploited and oppressed for solidarity in the struggle for socialism, which can be realized only through the proletarian world revolution.

5. THE TRAGEDY OF THE GERMAN PROLETARIAT

By Georg Jungclas

I. The 1929-1933 Economic Crisis Poses the Question: Socialism or Fascism?

In 1929 the germs of the permanent crisis of world capitalism, temporarily concealed, reappeared in full force. This development was inevitably to lead to a heightening of the social contradictions and a polarization of class forces. On the one hand, it meant stepped-up revolt against capitalist chaos among the workers, and this was shown by the mounting influence of the Communist Party. On the other hand, it meant a redoubled effort by finance capital to shore up the capitalist order, whose fragility had become apparent to all. The bourgeois democracy of the Weimar Republic became too narrow to contain the class struggle; it could no longer guarantee monopoly capital hegemony over the masses. Police measures and rule by decree no longer sufficed to surmount the growing difficulties. In this situation, finance capital began to rely more and more on using reactionary, extraparliamentary, and fascist mass movements against the organized working class.

Fascism is not the same as a dictatorship based on just the police and military apparatus. Fascism is a distinctive product of the decay of capitalist society. It is distinguished from all other reactionary strong regimes in that it is a mass movement. Fascism's mass base was the petty bourgeoisie, which was deprived of the basis for its existence and rapidly became impoverished and pauperized. The growing impoverishment of the petty bourgeoisie necessarily led to its radicalization. While the politicalization of the workers had a clear anticapitalist and socialist character, a stable class axis was lacking in the radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie. Whereas the worker in the plant confronted his class enemy, the boss, directly, the ruined petty bourgeois saw himself as the victim of too powerful competitors and of the unions. His revolt was not directed against a definite enemy but was of a completely general and negative character. Thus it could be played upon and directed by the most disparate forces. This is why the

petty bourgeoisie in this situation easily became the victim of an unbridled demagoguery that used radical, and sometimes even anticapitalist, rhetoric.

"At this juncture, the historic role of fascism begins. It sets on its feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and who are ever in dread of being forced down into its ranks; it organizes and militarizes them at the expense of finance capital, under the cover of the official government, and it directs them to the extirpation of proletarian organizations, from the most revolutionary to the most conservative."¹

Fascism is not a "trick" of the financial magnates. To be sure, it plays its historic role as a tool of finance capital. But it is by no means "fated" that these strata will become a supporting force for finance capital. In spite of the indisputable differences between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, it is possible that they may combine politically against big capital, since the workers truly are the last ones to bear responsibility for the petty bourgeoisie's impoverishment.

The workers can bring the middle classes which have been set in motion over to their side, if they wage a determined struggle against the capitalist system and if, in this struggle, they demonstrate their strength and take the offensive—but not by making concessions to backward petty-bourgeois prejudices. It is not by accommodating to the petty bourgeoisie that the workers can win it as an ally but by showing their strength in effectiveness, consciousness, and determination to struggle.

From 1924 to 1929, big industry gave the fascist bands just enough support to keep them from disappearing. It had no need for them just then and regarded them as a reserve. During those years, German industry was engaged in a sweeping rationalization with the help of foreign capital. This called for international collaboration and the renunciation of aggressive foreign policies. The result of this undertaking, however, was the total ruin into which the outbreak of the economic crisis plunged German industry in particular.

In one fell swoop, all the symptoms of the crisis of the capitalist system were revealed. There was only one way the capitalists could solve this crisis: by lowering wages, which had risen during the period of relative stabilization, and by wiping out the social gains won by the working class since 1918. Furthermore, the state would have to impose drastic taxes on the middle classes. To carry out these designs, it would be necessary to crush the resistance of the organized workers. The capitalists thus had a renewed need for a deep-cutting political

instrument: the fascist movement. It is true that by means of the decree-laws, chancellors Brüning and von Papen had already imposed wage cuts, wiped out social benefits, and inflicted crushing taxes. However, that did not suffice. The crisis was so acute that big industry had to bind the workers hand and foot if it wanted to continue to function on a capitalist basis. The crisis had not only created the desire for a "strong state" in the minds of the capitalists, but had also produced the mass movement necessary for the struggle. The number of small-business failures was greater than ever, unemployment sapped the workers' class strength and disorganized them. Fascism picked up strength also among the young workers, for in 1932 almost a third of the unemployed were under twenty-four years of age.

The situation of students, unable to find jobs after graduation, was particularly difficult. War veterans were deprived of their pensions. The fascist movement recruited from all these strata. It grew at an alarming rate. The NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei*—National Socialist German Workers' Party) received only 800,000 votes in the 1928 Reichstag elections, but by 1930 it polled 6,400,000 votes.

The Constitution of the Weimar Republic, which had been adopted by the Constituent Assembly in Weimar in 1919, was often called a model of liberal democracy. But this democracy did not do away with the division of society into classes. It did not take away the ruling class's key positions. Finance capital decisively dominated society's economic life through its big banks and trusts. The aristocratic officer corps retained its ascendancy over the armed forces. Furthermore, reactionary judges interpreted the laws according to their own lights; reactionary professors dominated the universities and institutions of higher learning.

On the other hand, democracy gave the workers' movement the opportunity to organize and carry on its agitation with a degree of freedom. Many functionaries of workers' organizations also held jobs in the independent municipal administrations.

When the Weimar Constitution was adopted, Germany was on the verge of moving toward a socialist revolution. The bourgeois parties were forced to make sweeping concessions to the working class. But at the same time democracy offered great advantages to the capitalist class. Through class collaboration, it enmeshed a large part of the workers' organizations. It mitigated the class struggle and thereby helped to veil class contradictions and create illusions that it was still possible to

achieve progress within capitalist society in an epoch when its reactionary characteristics were already fully manifest.

The fact that the Constitution contained a relatively large number of democratic rights and liberties ought not to be attributed to the subjective will of the ruling circles: It was rather an inescapable result of the November Revolution. The Weimar Constitution reflected the correlation of forces existing in 1919. It was a compromise that should have been taken advantage of to further the revolutionary development.

In capitalist society, the democratic form of government is never realized in all its implications. The influence of the workers' movement in public life is circumscribed in various ways.

In the epoch of imperialism, state power is an important tool in the struggle for influence on the world market. That is why the various capitalist groups contend for governmental influence. In a period of quiescence, they prefer to attain this objective within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Through their economic power they can exercise decisive influence on the greater part of the press and on the political parties, including the social-democracy.

In a period of crisis, bourgeois democracy cannot even maintain its outward forms. The state, just like the private economy, is obliged to reduce its expenses. Wages are lowered and the standard of living of the masses is reduced through cutbacks in social-welfare spending.

The ruling classes always try to effect this social retrogression with the help and compliance of the workers' organizations, in order to forestall social disturbances. From its class collaboration, the social-democracy feels itself profoundly responsible for bourgeois society and is prepared to make "sacrifices."

But this can be carried only to a certain point. A policy which at every turn results in worsened living conditions for the people can never retain popularity. The party that bears full or partial responsibility for it will feel the impact very soon within its own organization or in the elections. If the crisis deteriorates to a certain point, the Social-Democratic Party will have to repudiate its responsibility to safeguard its own existence. From the bourgeoisie's standpoint also, it is important to have the social-democracy in the government only as long as it can put a damper on trade-union action, that is, only as long as it has a mass base in the working class.

A dictatorship—as everyone can easily see—represents only a small minority of the population. And for that reason it can

be a danger to the system. A modern industrial country cannot long be governed by the force of bayonets. That is why the ruling classes needed a mass movement to counterbalance the workers' movement. This made its appearance in the form of the fascist organizations.

All the governments of the time, from Brüning to Schleicher, recognized in principle that National Socialism represented an important social force. But that did not mean that they were ready to hand over power to the Nazis just like that. The ruling classes feared that a government made up of declassed elements might compromise Germany and follow an adventurist course internationally. The old bureaucracy of cabinet ministers and professional politicians feared being squeezed out by "obscure clerks."

Particularly hesitant were the export industries, which were still making profits, as well as I. G. Farben; however, the groups hard hit by the crisis, heavy industry, the mining and metallurgical industry, with Vereinigte Stahlwerke at its head, and the big landowners, were ready to try the fascist experiment. The ruling classes' standard operating principle can also be seen here: utilizing movements and robbing them of their dynamic force by welcoming their leaders into the government without giving them any real power.

The National Socialists' political tactics, like their economic notions, were marked by the movement's intermediate social position. It was "antibourgeois" insofar as it harbored an aggressive hatred of the "system"; on the other hand, it dared not wage an open struggle for power. Such a struggle would have also set the working class in motion and rapidly turned into a struggle against the existing society. The nationalists feared such consequences. But Hitler and his companions knew that a coalition policy could be dangerous. When his political friend, Frick, entered the Thuringian state government in 1930, he was forced to take responsibility for laws which the Nazis generally characterized as "reactionary" and that went completely against their election promises. Precisely this could have proved a severe test for the Nazis in the eyes of the masses of the organization and its supporters, who reacted in an emotional, radical and antiparliamentary way. It would have become still more dangerous if Hitler had placed himself in such a position as a member of a bourgeois coalition government. His supporters would have gone over to the Communists en masse.

During the transitional period, when parliamentary democracy

was in reality already bankrupt but the Nazis were not yet in power, a series of "presidential cabinets" were formed, named by the president of the Reich and responsible to him alone. This dictatorship of Hindenburg meant that a narrow layer of the ruling class, with the Prussian Junkers at its head, had all political power in its hands. This development had already culminated under Brüning.

The draft budget proposed by Brüning in 1930 included energetic measures to reduce social-welfare spending and to boost indirect taxes considerably. Since the social-democracy refused to vote for this proposal, it was impossible to get it through the Reichstag. There was absolutely no parliamentary combination that could be put together to pass it. The government determined to enact the bill by decree.

This first decree-law was promulgated in July 1930. After that date, all important questions were resolved by decree. Brüning issued decrees restricting the freedom of the press and assembly, and with his decree of December 1931 virtually annulled all union contracts.

The cabinet was a minority government because it was supported only by the Center. The social-democracy refused to support the government proposal and protested against the decrees, but did not follow this up in any militant way. Out of fear that a government crisis would bring the German Nationalists and the Nazis to power, it still voted as a last resort against a motion of no confidence introduced by the German Communist Party.

The Reichstag elections of September 1930 were followed by the full emergence of the Nazi party onto the political scene. The decisive votes came from the middle class. This was very important for the Nazis' tactics after the elections. Hitler then declared publicly that he wanted to come to power by legal means only and that he stood on the principle of private property. In the Reichstag, Hitler's party together with the Nationalists constituted the "National Opposition."

The capitalist sectors hardest hit by the crisis, heavy industry and the landowners, violently attacked Brüning because he temporized with the social-democratic and Christian trade unions. They called for the entry of the Nazis into the government. The Reichswehr generals who saw an invaluable military reserve in the SA (*Sturmabteilung* — Storm Troopers) supported this demand. But neither Brüning nor his principal minister, General Groener, the minister of the interior, was ready to work with the Nazis. They also dispensed with General Schleicher,

who was acting as mediator to persuade Hitler to enter the government.

The National Socialist tide mounted daily. When Hitler ran against Hindenburg in the second presidential elections, he received 13,600,000 votes, or 36 per cent of the votes cast. Hindenburg was elected thanks to social-democratic votes.

After the outcome of the elections, a new regroupment began among the forces which up until then had backed Hindenburg, which in effect was the same as backing Brüning. The generals now called for Brüning's resignation because they saw in him the greatest obstacle to collaboration with the Nazis. On May 30, 1931, Brüning was dismissed by Hindenburg, whom he had helped in his electoral fight.

The center of all the plotting done to carry off this maneuver was the aristocratic *Herrenclub*. General Schleicher as well as Hindenburg's secretary Meissner—who managed to hold that post under Ebert, Hindenburg, and Hitler—were among the instigators of this operation. This government crisis differed from all preceding ones in that it transpired entirely behind the backs of all the political parties in the Reichstag. The center of decision-making had shifted from the Reichstag to the *Herrenclub* and Hindenburg's antechamber.

Hindenburg had always been a reactionary old-time Prussian Junker. It is significant that the break between Brüning and Hindenburg came precisely over the question of regulating the eastern estates. In Hindenburg's eyes this plan was "agrarian bolshevism" (*Agrar-Bolschewismus*). For his eightieth birthday in 1927, the East Prussian Junkers presented him with the estate of Neudeck, which had once been the seat of the Hindenburg family. Like most of the estates in East Prussia, it did not produce a profit but it gave Hindenburg a direct economic tie to his peers, the Junkers.

The presidential cabinet named by Hindenburg and headed by von Papen represented only a narrow layer of the ruling classes. Nevertheless, it brought together the most diverse interests. Present in it, first of all, were the Junkers, represented by Minister of Agriculture von Braun, and Minister of the Interior von Gayl. The fortune of the German Junkers was bound up with their influence in the state apparatus. Their power derived from the fact that they were at one and the same time land-owners and military officers and had also installed themselves among the top functionaries. For seventy years they had been propped up by privileges and subsidies. But after 1929, their situation was completely hopeless: without energetic support they

would be consigned to bankruptcy. For this reason it is not surprising that they did everything possible to hang on to political power. Big industry was less strongly represented in the von Papen cabinet than were the landowners. I.G. Farben was represented in it by Professor Warmbold. The von Papen government anchored itself to the big bankers (Schacht). Trusts like Vereinigte Stahlwerke waited and set their sights on a coalition government including Hitler.

The von Papen government did not base itself solely on the Junkers and finance capital, but also on the army and the senior state functionaries. The "real officers" viewed the SA elite corps with great skepticism. They saw it as a collection of declassed elements, adventurers, mercenaries, etc. High state functionaries were very uncomfortable at the thought of society being infiltrated by Nazi upstarts ready to take over the best-paid positions.

The Stahlhelm (Steel Helmets) was founded right after the war as a counterrevolutionary organization of combat veterans. This organization in a short space of time became a white guard, an army for civil war, about 200,000 in number. It retained the red, white, and black flag of the Hohenzollerns. Politically, the Stahlhelm was close to the German National Party, which was the rallying point for all the reactionary bourgeoisie. After Hugenburg took the leadership of this party in 1928, antiparliamentary and fascist characteristics became evident in it. Hugenburg came from heavy industry. He was a director of Krupp. But his power stemmed primarily from the control he exercised over the press, especially the provincial press. He owned Scherl and UFA publications. In reality, Hugenburg was working to become dictator himself, and that was the cause of profound enmity between him and Hitler. The Nazis had won over a large part of the German Nationalist voters. For this reason, the German Nationalists supported every presidential cabinet that was independent of parliament, and demanded that Hindenburg abolish the Weimar Constitution by a *coup d'état*.

The von Papen government soon came into conflict with all the parties. But that had been Hindenburg's intention when he named von Papen. Hindenburg, like Schleicher, wanted a government that kept itself aloof from the parties on the one hand but neutralized the Nazis on the other.

The von Papen government made concessions to the Nazis. The ban on the SA was lifted and the chancellor of the Reich took every occasion to note the difference between the "National Socialist progressive movement" and the forces of the enemies of the state on the left. The government fought the Communists by

proscribing newspapers, banning demonstrations, and staging a large number of trials for high treason.

At the same time, it began a similar offensive against the social-democracy. The government's hardest blow fell on the state government of Prussia, which was seemingly the stronghold of democracy. The social-democracy had occupied apparently impregnable positions there since the revolution of November 1918. On July 20, 1932, the government of Prussia was deposed and the social-democratic chief of police arrested. Simultaneously, the entire state administration was purged and turned over to the aristocrats.

The next Reichstag elections took place on July 31, 1932, and the Nazis were obliged to attack the government. They were irritated moreover because only the nobility was benefiting from the purge of the state bureaucracy. The new elections brought Hitler's party considerable new voting gains. The number of votes it received rose from 6,400,000, or 18 per cent of the votes cast in the summer of 1930, to 13,700,000, or 31.8 per cent.

After these elections, the Junkers and the generals again tried to bring the Nazis into the government in order to control them. They were prepared to make concessions and possibly to give the chancellorship to Hitler. But Hindenburg opposed that. He wanted to do no more than name Hitler vice-chancellor. Hitler, however, demanded full power.

After the failure of the negotiations over the formation of the government, the Nazis set a new course of opposition to von Papen's government. The conflict deepened when a court in Beuthen passed death sentences on some fascist murderers. The government had issued a decree against political terrorism, instituting the death penalty for murder and prison sentences for lesser offenses. The government had hoped thereby to intimidate the SA. But these penalties were designed with the Communists in mind, and it was very inopportune that those first hit by the stiffer penalties were four Nazis who had killed a Communist agricultural worker in his bed in Potempa (Silesia).

Although the von Papen government had the support at most of only 10 per cent of the Reichstag deputies, it went on placidly governing. A brutal reaction reigned. Between August 17 and November 2, special tribunals sentenced Communists and social-democrats to a total of 300 years in prison. Reactionary judges cold-bloodedly condemned workers to long prison terms for minor infractions, while Nazi criminals were treated with the greatest circumspection. The Reichstag was convened on September 1 and dissolved again forthwith, before a motion of no confidence introduced by the Communists had been voted on.

According to the Constitution, the government had to prepare new elections before November 6. Its determined attitude had rehabilitated it in the eyes of the reactionary forces on which it based itself. The Junkers and heavy industry were greatly vexed by the "leftist course" of the National Socialists. The latter, moreover, were having financial difficulties at the time. Hitler was knocking on the door of heavy industry in vain to obtain funds. The elections brought a vote drop for the National Socialists, from 13,750,000 to 11,701,000, while the vote for the German Nationalists rose from 2,108,000 to 3,007,000.

It was then expected that von Papen would turn to the Center, the German Nationalists, and National Socialists to form a "national coalition." But von Papen's government was already deeply split. Its widely heralded incursions into the field of foreign affairs had ended in a fiasco. The demand for equal rights for Germany had brought about a strong rapprochement between England and France. The government's action against Prussia, moreover, created tensions in the south German states. The conflict of interest between big industry and the Junkers had emerged. The high prices for food products which the landowners were demanding were not in the interests of big industry, since these high prices had an impact on the wage demands of the workers. When the minister of agriculture submitted a bill calling for import quotas on agricultural products, Warmbold, the representative of I. G. Farben, publicly exhibited his coolness. The government's economic policy was a total failure. Dr. Luther, director of the Reichsbank, publicly warned against carrying the authoritarian regime too far. Krupp von Bohlen announced that he was in favor of a new government. Negotiations between Hindenburg and Hitler again came to nothing.

On December 2, 1932, General Schleicher was named chancellor. Schleicher had taken an active part in the intrigues against Brüning. He also had passed for the strong man in the von Papen government. It had long been known that he was pursuing a personal policy. He understood that the government needed a broader base. Since the attempt to bring the National Socialists into the government had failed, he tried to form a "trade-union government." This government was to base itself on a front of social-democratic trade unionists, the Christian trade unions, and the NSDAP workers headed by Gregor Strasser. Schleicher's ideas tended toward a "state capitalism" under the supervision of the generals, similar to that apparently achieved to a certain degree in the economy during World War I. In contrast to von Papen, this "social general" tried to function as a popular states-

man. His government had all the characteristics of a Bonapartist regime.

Schleicher tried to win over the unions in order to separate them from the Social-Democratic Party. A section of the "free unions," with Tarnow as president, was favorable to this plan. But the unions' ties with the social-democracy were still strong enough so that realization of this scheme proved impossible. Schleicher did not want in any case to extend this collaboration to the social-democracy, because such collaboration would run up against difficulties in the reactionary camp. Nor did he succeed in breaking up the National Socialist movement. He offered the vice-presidency to Strasser but this failed because of Hitler's opposition.

It was therefore clear that Schleicher would not succeed in setting up a stable government. The landowners and big industrialists then turned away from him and new attempts were made to bring the Nazi party into the government. Von Papen and Hindenburg's son, Colonel Hindenburg, stepped forward as mediators. It was difficult to find a compromise because Hindenburg did not want Hitler as chancellor.

But then, like a bomb, a malignant political scandal exploded—the *Osthilfe* (the government aid program for the eastern territories) scandal. A Center deputy, obviously at General Schleicher's instigation, exposed cases of corruption in which even some of Hindenburg's closest friends were implicated. The rumor circulated that Hindenburg's son himself probably was implicated. He was said to have obtained government subsidies for estates that were completely unviable economically, and to have negotiated these subsidies for a kickback.

It thus became a vital matter to the landowners to get rid of the Schleicher government. Pressured by this scandal, Hindenburg was now ready to name Hitler chancellor. Moreover, the National Socialist movement had reached its peak. The elections of November 1932 had shown a decline in the Nazi vote for the first time. In January 1933, the elections in Thuringia showed that this trend was continuing. Great ferment could be discerned in the party. It was the moment to intervene while there was still time, before the movement became demoralized. At the same time, the attempts at governing by means of presidential cabinets had failed. The ruling class was ready to make much greater concessions to Hitler to secure a government that would be stable at last.

The fascist movement had passed its peak, and that was the political expression of the fact that the economic crisis had passed

its most critical stage. But it was just this prospect of a stabilization in economic conditions with the workers' movement still unbroken which impelled the big industrialists to favor a strong reactionary government. This was the great moment for Hitler. On January 30, 1933, he had himself named chancellor of the Reich by Hindenburg, although only as the head of a government of "national unity."

II. The Attitude of the Social-Democracy Disarms the Working Class

The "good times" of the period of relative stability and the blossoming of the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*—Social-Democratic Party of Germany) had provided the bases for a new social-democratic theory: The victory of socialism would not be the product of capitalist collapse but would be realized gradually as the natural consequence of the new evolution inherent in capitalism. Monopoly capitalism with its trusts and cartels was smoothing out and mitigating capitalist contradictions. Capitalist crises were becoming more and more rare, and they were not as profound as in the epoch of primitive capitalism. At the Social-Democratic Party congress in Kiel in 1927, the party economist Rudolf Hilferding, who had formerly written the Marxist study *Finance Capital*, explained: "In reality, organized capitalism means then that the capitalist principle of free competition is replaced by the socialist principle of planned production."

In addition to this, international cartels meant that national contradictions had been resolved through international collaboration. These "theoreticians" pointed to America, Ford in particular, and maintained that increased production brought with it an equivalent rise in wages. Higher wages, in fact, were in the interests of the capitalists, since highly paid workers could buy more commodities. The workers should support rationalization under reasonable conditions because it raised productivity, which, to repeat, was in their interest. Strikes were harmful to both parties and should be avoided as much as possible. In return for this, the workers should demand a part in the management of the big companies. This "economic democracy" was the natural transition to socialism.

The new economic theory also entailed a new attitude toward the state. On this question, Wilhelm Dittman, one of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, said at the Magdeburg Congress in 1920: "While we had an autocratic state, we characterized

the government as the representative of the ruling classes: It was chosen from on high by the Kaiser without regard for the Reichstag or for the people. Today, in the democratic republic, the power comes from the grass roots, from the people, and the composition of the government is determined by the Reichstag, which is elected by all men and women over the age of twenty. This is why today we can prevent the state from representing solely the interests of the possessing classes, as was the case before the war. This consideration for the workers' interests must increase to the extent that their influence on the government becomes stronger. Through social security, health services, and schools, the workers are on the point of transforming the bourgeois class state into a democratic 'social state.' The party has the obligation to pursue this development and to further it by occupying a great many leading posts in the administration, the courts, the police and, if possible, also in the army. This policy's natural goal is the conquest of governmental power, even through the medium of a coalition government. This does not mean that the class struggle has been abandoned but that it has been carried to a higher level."

But the "good times" of capitalist stabilization were shorter than any prewar transitional period. During those years, workers' wages rose, to be sure, but the nationalization brought on a speedup in the tempo of work and increased unemployment. The monopolists made modest concessions only under strong pressure. For this reason, even in those years there were few concrete possibilities for the SPD's new political and social line. This showed up clearly in the government of the social-democrat Hermann Müller, who, in order to obtain a parliamentary majority, allied himself not only with the Weimar coalition parties but brought the German People's Party, the party of the big industrialists, into the government. But the German People's Party firmly set definite conditions and the government was forced to conduct a policy that was far from a left-bourgeois policy. Hermann Müller went from one dishonorable compromise to another.

These capitulations were made worse by the circumstances surrounding them. There was, for example, the voting of funds for Battleship A. The social-democracy had conducted its election campaign under the slogan "No Battleship, Bread for the Children Instead!" But right after the elections, the government proposed allocating the initial credits for the construction of a battleship.

The social-democracy was responsible for a bourgeois govern-

ment and had to defend itself against the criticisms of the radical elements. In defending itself against the extremists of the right, its hands were tied by various considerations, such as the reactionary character of the bureaucracy, support from the right-wing parties in the Reichstag, etc. Defense against the left, against the Communists, was a different matter. There it displayed a special harshness. In the first place, the German CP was a direct rival and, in the second place, social-democrats wanted to prove to their bourgeois allies that they were partners who could be depended on to defend the bourgeois order.

While the Red Frontline Soldiers' Association (*der rote Frontkämpfer Bund*) was banned by social-democratic Minister of the Interior Severing in 1919, reactionary organizations like the Stahlhelm were left free to pursue their counterrevolutionary and monarchist machinations. The Berlin chief of police, the social-democrat Zörgiebel, banned all outdoor demonstrations for May 1, 1929. This was an extraordinary provocation.

The Communists defied the ban and tried to form processions of demonstrators, but the social-democratic police dispersed them. Incessant clashes with the police ensued, in course of which twenty-five workers were killed in the working-class neighborhoods of Berlin. The sense of outrage among the workers was great, and unrest extended widely into the bourgeois left.

Hermann Müller could not maintain himself. He was toppled in March 1930, and with him fell the last parliamentary government of the Weimar period. Thereafter began the period of decrees. The Reichstag was dissolved, and new elections were set for September 14, 1930. These elections brought a very severe defeat for the social-democracy, whose vote fell from 29.8 per cent to 24.6 per cent. At the same time, these elections registered the National Socialists' first great advance and a new upsurge of the German CP.

The social-democracy's defeat was unquestionably the result of the policy of the social democratic ministers in the Müller government: their vote for the battleship along with the bloody events of May 1. But the decisive factor was that the economic crisis had deprived the social-democratic policy of its *raison d'être*. It became evident that rationalization and exploitation in the form of trusts had not weakened but, on the contrary, had made the capitalist contradictions acuter.

At the same time, the social-democracy developed a defeatist line for the workers: In a period of crisis, new conquests were out of the question; they had to strive to preserve the old ones and quietly hope for better times.

At the June 1931 SPD congress, there was no longer any question of "organized capitalism" or of "economic democracy." Tarnow, the reporter on the economic situation, had to recognize that the crisis they were experiencing had greater dimensions and went deeper than all preceding ones. He cited a whole number of causes for this crisis and argued against characterizing it as the final crisis of capitalism. He stressed that "the economy will find routes leading to a new boom."

The social-democracy was unwilling to draw anticapitalist conclusions from the crisis. This showed up clearly in a report by Tarnow. "We are now at the bedside of a sick capitalism, not only to make a diagnosis but also — how should I put it? — as doctors who want to cure it and as happy heirs who cannot wait for its death but want to help it along by poison. We must be doctors who want to cure it and heirs who want to take possession, tomorrow if possible, of the entire legacy of the capitalist system. This double role of doctor and heir is a terrible duty."

Certain demands were raised, of course, like the 40-hour week, great public works, lower tariffs, etc. But the question was left unanswered as to how these demands or any others really capable of alleviating the poverty of the masses could gain acceptance if monopoly capitalism would not willingly grant such concessions. The crisis was developing in the direction of a bourgeois dictatorship, and whatever the workers' struggle attempted against the impoverishment of the masses had to take on a political and revolutionary character. But that was just what the SPD tried to prevent. And that is why its proposals for alleviating the crisis went no further than show, and why its professions of faith in socialism and "planned economy" went no further than empty phrases.

We already know what was included in Brüning's decrees: cuts in unemployment benefits, increased taxes and tariffs, abolition of freedom of the press and assembly. The social-democrats "tolerated" these decrees and saw to it that the unions bowed to the December 1931 decrees ordering wage cuts of 10 to 15 per cent. They justified this toleration by explaining that the republic had to be defended against fascism. If the Brüning government fell, the upshot would be a fascist and reactionary government in comparison to which Brüning was a "lesser evil." This might have been so from a purely parliamentary standpoint, but politics and struggle were now completely outside the parliamentary framework.

The social-democracy feared fascism and revolutionary class struggle equally, and therefore it capitulated to bourgeois reaction.

But a policy born of fear is seldom "prudent," and history has shown that a defeatist strategy opens the way for fascist dictatorship and sets the stage for the defeat of those pursuing that strategy. Otto Wels, the president of the social-democracy, made the following statement in his speech opening the Madgeburg Congress in 1929:

"It is our duty to strengthen democracy and to protect the republic. But if the enemies of the republic should succeed in so disrupting German democracy that dictatorship is the only solution, then comrades, the Stahlhelm, the National Socialists, and their brothers the Moscow Communists should know this: The social-democracy and the trade unions, as the representatives of the great masses of the people, arrayed in their tight-knit organizations, united by conscious and responsible actions and by faultless discipline, will know how to employ dictatorship. Only these organizations, and no one else, have the right to resort to dictatorship. We are the only ones who can guarantee the return of democracy as soon as the difficulties of the crisis have been overcome. This point must be made clearly to all desperate elements, wherever they may be, so that no one can doubt that the social-democracy will always fight determinedly for this state and this republic."

This was strong language, but what was the reality? Throughout 1931, the SPD continued to decline. The National Socialist wave mounted irresistibly, and the terror it brought with it struck not only the Communists but also the SPD and trade-union activists. The SPD leadership realized very clearly that something had to be done to prevent the party members, and above all the youth, from sinking into despair and becoming demoralized by passivity. That is why toward the end of the year it was decided to create the Iron Front (*die Eiserne Front*).

The party had already set up a military defense organization, the *Reichsbanner* (the Flag of the Reich), in 1924. It had about a million members. Now a still broader front was to be set up, and "combat groups," the Iron Fist (*Eiserne Faust*), were established inside the unions. The workers' sports organizations were also brought into the front. In all, the Iron Fist numbered about 4,500,000 men.

Its first task—and this was very characteristic of the movement—was to conduct an electoral campaign on behalf of the bourgeois coalition's presidential candidate, Hindenburg. But despite this misuse, the Iron Fist became a respectable counterweight to the National Socialists. The masses in the party and the unions really believed that this powerful organization would

actually be employed in the struggle against fascism. The Iron Front organized great marches. Workers by the thousands marched in serried formations with banners and music, and in innumerable rallies raised their fists, shouted "Freedom!" and swore to defend democracy and the republic.

The social-democracy elected Hindenburg, but it very quickly got its comeuppance— for it was evident that the support of his candidacy by democrats and republicans had made Hindenburg neither a democrat nor a republican. Brüning was pushed out, and the von Papen government dropped the last trappings of a parliamentary regime. The social-democracy was then struck by the same repressive measures which up until then had been principally reserved for the Communists.

The purge took place chiefly among the state functionaries. The reason, of course, was that it was necessary to break the governmental power of the social-democracy in Prussia, which it had held firmly since the revolution of November 1918. Since this was impossible by parliamentary means, the chancellor whom the social-democrats had elected (as a lesser evil against Hitler) issued a decree naming von Papen as Reich's Commissioner for Prussia. The Prussian government and the social-democratic chief of police in Berlin were ousted by this despotic *coup d'état*.

Until then, the social-democracy had always considered Prussia the fortress of democracy. It had a police force of 90,000 men, including a very great number of social-democrats. All this was swept away arbitrarily and irrevocably by a decision of the reactionary clique. The time had come for the Iron Front and democracy to undergo their trial by fire. On the evening of July 19, great mass rallies took place in Berlin and other cities. The newspaper *Vorwärts* reported that when the speakers proclaimed "the German working class's determination to wage a united struggle against the fascist danger, the cry 'Freedom! Freedom!' came from the lips of thousands as they raised their fists as if taking an oath."

The next day *Vorwärts* published a communication saying that Severing and the other ministers had been summoned to von Papen's office in the afternoon and that he had informed them of the decree. Severing told von Papen that these decrees violated the Constitution and that he would "yield only to force. World history is being written in these days and a republican minister does not quit his post like a deserter." Severing refused to leave his post. Later Bracht arrived as the commissioner appointed to take Severing's place. He was accompanied by the newly named chief of police and a military officer. They invited Severing to

leave his office. He refused. He was informed that they would resort to force in that case. Severing replied that he did not want to give the signal for bloodshed in Germany. In the interests of Germany and Prussia, he yielded to force.

On the same day, the government dismissed police chief Grzesinsky and deputy chief Weiss, as well as Heimannsberg, the chief of the military police. They also declared that the government's action was contrary to the Constitution. That afternoon an armored car with a captain, two lieutenants and twelve helmeted Reichswehr soldiers carrying hand grenades, drove up in front of police headquarters. The three ousted men were arrested. As they were being taken away, the armed police stood at attention. This was the Prussian police's last republican act. It was a clear demonstration of the value of republican or democratic organizations in the police force or the military officer corps when it comes to carrying out their oath to the Constitution. If the Berlin police had resisted the arrest of their chief, that would have been the signal for the workers to rise up against the fascist danger. Even the Communists, who not long before had supported the Nazi plebiscite against the Prussian government, would have been forced to defend democracy.

As soon as the government's provocations became known, the members of the Iron Front and the Reichsbanner rushed to their rallying points to await the call to battle.

The Iron Front and SPD leadership put out a leaflet in which they warned against provocations and advised waiting for the decisions of the responsible leaders.

The "responsible" leaders decided to do nothing. There was not one hour of general strike, not a protest. Thus, the "fortress of democracy" was surrendered without resistance. This was the dress rehearsal for the seizure of power by the Nazis six months later.

Vorwärts appeared with the banner headline: "Redouble the Fight!" By this it meant the electoral struggle of July 31, 1932. The social-democracy together with the unions had a total of about four million men in the Iron Front ready for the struggle. In addition to this, there were the 90,000 militarily armed police. Von Papen's government had absolutely no popularity. Facing the above forces were the army; the Stahlhelm, which had no real combat force; and the National Socialists, who could have been used despite their rivalry with von Papen but who had yet to prove their real combat strength. To what extent would the SA have closed ranks with von Papen? This was a big question mark. For the indoctrination of the SA had been that it was

to fight "black reaction," the "barons' clique," etc. Moreover, the right would have had to move over to make room for the Nazis, which it wanted to avoid if possible.

There were many unknowns on the reactionaries' side. The idea that the Nazis could be interposed against a general strike was absurd. It was precisely in such key industries as the railroads, the big factories, the electric-power plants, and transportation in the big cities, which would play an essential role in a general strike, that the unions held their strongest positions and the Nazis' influence was minimal.

If the workers might have hesitated, it would be because their morale had been undermined by the social-democratic leadership's defeatist policies and its strategy of coalition politics with the bourgeoisie in the "national interest." But there was no reason to believe that the workers would not have followed a call to a general strike if their leaders had urged them. The attitude of the police force was more doubtful. It had become accustomed to fighting the Communists and maintaining a wait-and-see attitude toward the Nazis.

The social-democracy's attitude on that day was in line with its general attitude in time of social crisis since the founding of the Weimar Republic. It was ready to compromise and capitulate rather than resort to methods of revolutionary struggle. It did not put its promises or slogans into practice. For this very reason, it did not save what it proposed to save. July 20 was a decisive defeat for the Iron Front, and great bitterness reigned among the cadres, above all in the Reichsbanner.

At the time of the June 30 elections, the social-democratic vote dropped from 24.5 per cent, or 8,578,000, in 1930, to 21.5 per cent, or 7,951,000. The votes lost went to the Communists. But the number of working-class votes lost was even greater than the figures showed, because a large part of the republican votes of the State party and the Center went to the social-democracy.

When the new Reichstag convened, the social-democrats made several radical proposals: abolition of the decrees, nationalization of heavy industry, etc. *Vorwärts* reported this news under the headline, "The Reichstag Takes the Offensive." But when von Papen declared the dissolution of the Reichstag before it had voted on these propositions, they accepted it. They did not take their parliamentary attacks into the street, where for years the real relationship of forces had been reflected. The beginning of a strike wave put the union leaders in a very uncomfortable position, and they did everything to put this situation back "in order."

After the defeat, or rather the capitulation of July 20, the social-democratic leaders were ready to tolerate any government,

even the most reactionary that was not *totally* fascist. The only thing they asked was that they not be outlawed. But this policy could not long continue.

On the other hand, the influence of the Communists was growing. The number of votes they received was increasing from election to election. The SPD was confronted with a new situation and the result was a new tendency to seek concessions. A group of union leaders headed by Leipart turned toward the Bonapartism of General Schleicher and tried to separate itself from the SPD.

"We are accused of being antinational," wrote Leipart in October 1932. "But we know very well that all civilizations evolve on national bases . . . We are antimilitarists and we publicly avow it. But we deny that we are pacifists, insensible to our people's interests or honor. We are fighters and not petty politicians who make deals. We conduct our struggle in conformity with the Constitution and with the support of political parties. Our main ally in this struggle is the social-democracy because it is that party which has striven most to enact our ideas into law. But our aspirations go beyond subjection to any party. We are too much concerned with society as a whole to tolerate being chained to a party. This is why we do not *a priori* consider the other parties our rivals." This article was perfectly suited to Schleicher's plan for forming a government based on a trade-union coalition. Leipart was not the only one; there was a group of young trade-union leaders around him. Although they had not yet broken with the SPD, they were already trying to come to an accommodation with fascism.

The political leaders of the social-democracy, Wels, Breitscheid and Stampfer, realized very quickly that no political compromise was possible between the social-democracy and the National Socialists. Their policy was dominated by the fear that the fascists would smash the workers' organizations.

As the fascist danger became more and more imminent, they made more and more radical declarations. Some declared themselves in favor of a united front with the Communists. Before, they had always maintained that "the Iron Front is the united front." Now they were ready to work with the German CP to a certain extent if it would accept the discipline of joint action and be willing to conclude a nonaggression pact. But no serious move was made on either side to come to any definite result.

When Hitler came to power, the Iron Front called a mass demonstration, in which for the first time a large part of the workers led by the Communists also participated. (There were even Communist speakers, for example, Törgler in Berlin.) But

the leaders of the parties still held back.

The SPD's former ministers, deputies, and secretaries wanted above all to prevent any mass action. They put all their hopes on the coming elections (March 3, 1933). According to *Vorwärts*, these elections were the means of striking a blow against the Hitler government. When the Nazis came to power, the social-democratic organizations were unbroken, but in reality the whole imposing structure was hollow; it had become an apparatus without any inner strength.

The party had opted for parliamentary actions, but the Reichstag was no longer a power factor and reactionary administrations in the central government had little by little undermined the importance of the state parliaments. The unions were not favorable to a political mass strike. The advance of fascism could only be blocked by a general strike and armed resistance, that is, a struggle for power by the workers. But the policy of toleration, Hindenburg's election, and the capitulation of July 20 had so undermined the workers' combativity that spontaneous mass uprisings were no longer possible.

The SPD leaders consoled themselves by thinking that Hitler was a prisoner of the coalition. But it turned out that they were again deceiving themselves, because they were looking at the relation of forces among the movements only in terms of governmental combinations and parliamentary coalitions and not realistically as a function of the relation of forces among the classes.

III. Stalinism Leads the Working Class to Defeat

The Communists were the first to foresee the onset of a crisis, though they interpreted its character in a completely false way. As early as 1928, at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, a resolution was adopted which predicted "the end of the relative stabilization" and the "beginning of the third period."

This bureaucratic and mechanistic dividing of evolution into "periods" was based on the following schema: the "first period" had been covered by the Comintern's first resolution, i.e., that part of the postwar revolutionary cycle extending from the end of the war in 1918 to the defeat in 1923; the "second period" comprised the period of "relative stabilization"; and the "third period" was automatically to put an immediate mass revolutionary upsurge and struggle for power on the order of the day from 1928 on.

In reality, the third-period perspective represented a mechanical transposition of Stalin's left turn in Russian economic policy (the break with the Bukharin tendency, the five-year plan in four

years, etc.). The events of May 1, 1929, in Berlin seemed to the Comintern leaders and the German CP leaders subservient to them to be a confirmation of this perspective.

The first signs of a policy that led to the separation of the Communist workers from the masses in the unions appeared at this time. The Communists should have taken part in the union rallies and called for transforming them into demonstrations. In this way, they could probably have successfully kept themselves from being isolated in the face of police attacks and made their demonstration the expression of the sentiments of a large part of the left-wing opposition within the unions. And a large part of that opposition would certainly have followed the Communists. Such a tactic would have swung the objective balance of forces between the police and the demonstrators in the workers' favor and made the police's murderous assault on a union demonstration difficult. In failing to do this, the KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*) isolated itself from the masses of union members and found itself alone in the face of the police attacks. The events also showed that the party was incapable of organizing a big protest strike—after twenty-five workers had been killed—despite the anger of a great section of the working class toward the police. The CP-led protest strike was not even able to stop traffic for five minutes on the day of the funeral.

In the CP press and in the Comintern organs, these events were portrayed as an offensive preparatory to the struggle for power. An appeal issued by the Comintern's West European Bureau said: "This struggle is not yet completed. For the entire international workers' movement it poses the problem of going over from the economic struggles of these last months to a political struggle against bourgeois society as a whole."

In the German CP press it was said: "The May battle in Berlin signals a mighty upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement throughout the Reich and the onset of a new revolutionary tide. The battles on the barricades in Berlin show that we are moving toward an immediate revolutionary situation and that this movement will put an armed rising on the order of the day."

This conformed well to the "theories of the third period," but in no way to the real relations of political strength in Germany.

The action of Berlin's social-democratic police chief, Zörgiebel, in the May days was later imitated by many of his comrades and colleagues, "little Zörgiebels," in the other states and cities governed by the social-democrats. These moves enabled the CP central leadership to foist on their followers a "theory" derived from the "theory" of the third period, the theory of "social-fascism," and to "prove" that "there is no principled difference between democracy and fascism."

"Fascist dictatorship is in no way opposed in principle to bourgeois democracy under whose cover the dictatorship of finance capital also prevails," read the resolution of the German CP central committee on the conclusions of the Second Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in May 1931.

In December 1931, Ernst Thälmann wrote in the magazine *Die Internationale*: "But there is a still more serious fact. Despite the conclusions of the Second Plenum . . . liberal tendencies to counterpose fascism to bourgeois democracy, Hitler's party to the social fascists, have turned up in our own ranks." Stalin's direct role in this catastrophic policy should be stressed. Stalin was the father of the formula "the social-democracy and National Socialism are not antipodes but twins."

"Fascism is the combat organization of the bourgeoisie which bases itself on the active support of the social-democracy. The social-democracy objectively is the moderate wing of fascism. There is no reason to think that the bourgeoisie's combat organizations could be victorious in struggles or in governing the country without the active support of the social-democracy . . . There is also little reason to suppose that the social-democracy could achieve decisive results in these struggles and in ruling the country without the active support of the combat organizations of the bourgeoisie. These organizations are not mutually exclusive but complementary. They are not antipodes but twins. Fascism is an informal bloc of these two organizations . . . The bourgeoisie cannot stay in power without this bloc." (quoted from *Die Internationale*, February 1932.)

If the social-democracy was characterized as fascist, Brüning's government already clearly "merited" the characterization of fascist. In December 1930, *Rote Fahne*, the German CP's central organ, wrote:

"Fascist dictatorship is no longer a threat, it is already an accomplished fact . . . We have a fascist republic. The Brüning cabinet has changed into a fascist dictatorship!" This assertion was logically to lead to an underestimation of the fascist danger and an enfeeblement of the struggle against fascism. If under Brüning, fascism had already triumphed without a struggle, how could the workers be mobilized to struggle against seizure of power by the fascists?

The monstrous theory of "social-fascism," which very simply declared the social-democracy a wing of fascism and stated that it was the principal and most immediate enemy to fight, made any sort of policy of united front with the social-democratic workers impossible.

All this flew in the face of the incontrovertible fact that only a united front of workers' organizations would have permitted

an effective struggle to be waged against the fascist danger.

The "social-fascist" formula applied not only to the social-democratic leadership but also to the party functionaries as a whole and, at times, to all SPD members, especially SPD trade-union functionaries—from the leadership to its representatives in the plants and the plant councils. This resulted in a new orientation in the German CP's trade-union policy. The traditional unions were called organs of counterrevolution, and new organizations were created based on new layers of the working class.

We find this new political line toward the unions expressed in crude form in a statement by Losovsky, the leader of the Red Trade Union International (*die Rote Gewerkschaftinternationale*): "Where is the most reactionary and backward part of the working class to be found today? It is that part of the working class organized in the reformist unions under the leadership of the reformist leaders, themselves consciously the most reactionary part of the working class. In the course of the struggle we can split away part of the working class from the social-democracy, but for the time being the workers who follow its lead are sabotaging the movement. We know by experience and by virtue of numerous examples that tens of thousands of unorganized workers are more progressive than those organized in the reformist federations, which are paralyzed by their gigantic union apparatus. Furthermore, the unorganized workers are more progressive than many Communists who are under the influence of the social-democratic ideology."

Since the unorganized were highly valued elements as against the organized workers, it was natural for "action committees," in which the unorganized workers played a great role, to be formed parallel to the unions in all strikes. In the elections to the plant councils, they put up their own "red" lists against the union lists; instead of fighting for the inclusion of Communists on the union lists, they even forbade the nomination of Communists on these lists. "Anyone who fails to struggle against the social-fascists, whose name is placed alongside theirs on a list, is supporting the bourgeois wrecking campaign against the workers and places himself outside the revolutionary front," wrote *Die Rote Fahne* on the occasion of the 1931 factory council elections. This tactic of running their "own" lists led to the exclusion from the unions of Communists active in the plants and promoted still more bitter conflict between the Communists and the social-democratic workers in the factories.

In addition, the German CP leadership founded their own trade unions grouped in the Red Trade Union Opposition

(*die Rote Gewerkschaftsbund Opposition*) in rivalry with the ADGB (*Algemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund—German General Trade Union Confederation*). The RGO turned out to be a great fiasco. It was formed primarily from KPD members and unorganized workers; a large part of its members were unemployed. Through this splitting tactic, the KPD leadership succeeded in creating a situation where there were virtually no Communists left in the unions or the plants. These two great bases of revolutionary activity were abandoned to the reformist union leaders. The organized workers, who in the majority were still employed in the plants, continued to feel loyal to their organizations, and refused to follow the strike calls of the new organizations which were playing a divisive role. A great number of strikes called by the RGO in the years 1929-33 ended in crushing defeats.

The KPD leadership still pinned its hopes on a mechanistic perspective of breakup in the Nazi party. The party press was always finding that the Nazis' influence had reached its peak. Any dispute in the fascist camp was viewed by the Stalinist bureaucracy—in this it was in complete accord with the social-democracy and the reformist bureaucrats—as the "the end" or the "beginning of the end," and was appraised as a great success for the KPD's antifascist struggle:

"The beginning of the breakup among the fascist movement's active partisans, which will surely grow, makes it necessary to differentiate between the fascist leaders and the masses who have been led astray . . ." (an excerpt from a resolution of the political bureau of the German CP, "The Struggle Against Fascism," June 4, 1930). A few months after this resolution, the Reichstag elections of September 14, 1930, registered an enormous jump in the vote for the Nazis, from 800,000 in 1928 to 6,400,000. But this did not stop the KPD leadership from rambling on about the breakup of the Nazi front:

"Yesterday was Mr. Hitler's 'big day,' but the Nazis' so-called electoral victory is the beginning of their end," said *Rote Fahne* of September 15, 1930, the day after the elections. On November 16, we find further: "September 14 was the high point of the National Socialist movement in Germany. From now on it can only decline."

Ernst Thälmann reported to the Second Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (published in *L'Internationale Communiste*, April 1931, No. 17/18, p. 799):

"Followers of the 'National Socialists' expect much from them after September 14, after their sensational success. We have not let ourselves be dismayed by these votes, which came in large part from the employed population and the followers of the

SPD. Most comrades know that even in our own ranks some comrades have pointed to the great danger represented by this development and even overestimated the danger. But we have soberly [?] and seriously [!] stated that September 14 was in a certain sense Hitler's best day, that he will have no better, only worse. The evaluation we made of this party's development has already been realized and has already been confirmed. Today the fascists have no more grounds for laughing [!]."

Since they were unwilling to face reality, the Communists could not undertake a vigorous struggle against fascism. On the one hand, they combated fascism with the putschist slogan: "Smash the Fascists Everywhere!" which made argument with the fascists' mass following impossible (this slogan was also directed against "social-fascists," "left social-fascists," and "social-fascist groupings," like opposition Communists and the Trotskyist Left Opposition). On the other hand, the Communists hoped to make inroads in the fascists' ranks by trying to fit fascist ideas into their propaganda. In the 1930 electoral battle, the KPD waged its campaign under the slogan of a "people's revolution" for "national and social liberation" quite in the spirit of the "national bolshevism" which Lenin had sharply refuted in his work *Left Communism: an Infantile Disorder*. These nationalist notions did not succeed in convincing the National Socialists, but they gave the KPD propaganda pernicious demagogic features.

In July 1931, after having first declared its opposition to it, the KPD central committee made an overnight decision to participate, alongside the Nazis and the Stahlhelm, in the plebiscite to dissolve the Prussian parliament and bring down the Prussian social-democratic government of Braun and Severing. This dealt another grave blow to the workers' united front. Support for a Hitler-Hugenburg vote against a social-democratic government necessarily exposed the falseness of the CP's anti-fascist slogans and deepened still further the rift between the CP and SPD workers. At the same time it perforce strengthened the social-democratic leaders' position with their mass following.

This line did as little damage to the Nazis as the non-Marxist policy of the "People's Front" that the Thälmann leadership had introduced when it took "national and social liberation" as its program. This participation in the "plebiscite" was a resounding defeat and this was clearly shown most of all in the areas that usually voted heavily for the CP.

Despite all its incorrect tactics and organizational failings, fresh masses were constantly moving toward the Communist movement. This demonstrated that the masses desired a socialist solution of the crisis. The Stalinist organizations' field of work

was primarily the great army of the unemployed. The CP vote, which was about 2,700,000, or 8.9 per cent in 1924, went to 3,260,000, or 10.6 per cent in 1928, and to 4,590,000, or 13 per cent, in 1930 and 1931.

The Communist workers did not lack the courage to fight, and many of them risked their lives in daily altercations with the SA terrorist groups and the police. But because of its ultraleft course, the party as a whole was unable to lead its cadres to an effective struggle within the framework of action by the entire working class. The mistaken course imposed on the party by the Comintern leadership rested besides on some definite realities in the country (just as, in another connection, Zörgiebel's actions had promoted acceptance of the theory of "social-fascism"). An example of this, among others, was the antagonism between the unemployed and the workers in the plants. The greater part of the CP's followers was recruited from among the mass of unemployed, while the SPD was more firmly rooted among the workers in the factories. But the difficulty was precisely that the unemployed could not undertake the necessary class actions while they were cut off from the workers in the plants.

This antagonism was not insurmountable. Wage cuts led automatically to cuts in unemployment benefits, and that alone pointed to a bond of interest between the unemployed workers and the workers in the plants. The duty of the revolutionary workers' movement was to allay the antagonism that was developing and to bring the two sections of the working class together through the establishment of a united front of workers' organizations with immediate and political and economic objectives.

The duty of the KPD leadership was to address itself to the leadership of the working-class organizations under SPD direction and, most of all, to turn to address the SPD leadership and explain:

"We disagree on many questions and the principled difference between social-democracy and Communism will never disappear by virtue of a pact. But it is in our common interest to defeat fascism; therefore, let us attempt to carry out this task together."

Language of this sort would have been understood by the most backward social-democratic worker. And if the social-democratic leadership had refused the proffered hand, that same worker would have seen that, in a crucial historic situation, the SPD was letting itself be guided by the ruling powers because it was unilaterally committed to their interests. Under such conditions, it would have been possible to draw a good part of the social-democratic workers into the struggle against the will of their leaders.

But, in fact, the policy of the central committee of the German CP was an unbroken succession of acts of sabotage against the united front. With the absurd formulation, "a united front from below only," it played into the hands of the reformist bureaucrats. All of Stalinism's pernicious "theories" found their practical, tangible expression in this sabotaging of the united front: "It is clear that our debate with the social-fascists is not taking place at the conference table but on the field of decisive struggles and may end before the revolutionary tribunals of the German soviet republic. And naturally this goes for a member of a little social-fascist factory council as well as for his big brothers. Severing and Zörgiebel, etc."

"Strip the social-fascists of their positions in the factories and the unions." But this perfect idiocy still did not suffice. Thus, we find in *Young Guard* (the Communist youth organ) the slogan "Drive the social-fascists from the plants, from the labor exchange, from the trade schools!" But why should this stop at the trade schools? And so we read in *Drum* (the organ of the Young Pioneers, a children's organization): "Chase the little Zörgiebels from your schools and the places where you play" (cited in *Die Internationale*, March 15, 1930). In the November-December issue of *Die Internationale*, Ernst Thälmann outlined the united front as the central committee saw it:

"We must propose everywhere to the social-democratic workers . . . the creation of a red united front directed . . . against Hitler's party and the social-democratic leadership. The fact, for example, that in our revolutionary trade-union work offers could have been made at the top to local ADGB leaderships or to other leading bodies in the reformist bureaucracy proves likewise that our principled struggle against the social-democracy has not been conducted in a manner sufficiently resolute to prevent such mistakes."

So, they wanted to work with the "social-democratic workers of good faith" but not with their organization or their leaders. But the social-democratic workers, who had many criticisms of their leaders' policy, nonetheless felt bound to their organization and its discipline. And, above all, in spite of their critical attitude toward their leaders, they knew that those leaders were not pure and simple fascists.

When von Papen dismissed the constitutional social-democratic government of Prussia, the central committee of the German CP proposed a united front to the social-democratic leadership and the unions. They proposed a general strike against von Papen's *coup d'état* in defense of the Braun-Severing government which they had tried to unseat eleven months previously by supporting the Nazi plebiscite. After all that had transpired, this sudden

proposal of a united front seemed most demagogic and was not taken seriously in any quarter. The KPD leaders' irresponsibility made it easy for the social-democratic leadership to find a pretext for persisting in their passivity, which was leading to suicide.

The Iron Front's capitulation on July 20 was followed by another jump in the Communist vote in the July 31 elections. It went from 4,590,000 votes, or 13 per cent in September 1930, to 5,220,000, or 14.3 per cent. But the elections brought a still greater gain for the National Socialists. In spite of everything, one could read an editorial in the Communist press: "The National Socialists' advance has been halted by the anti-fascist actions conducted by the German CP."

In the fall of 1932, there was a wave of strikes against the Brüning government's decrees. These strikes showed that it was possible to organize economic strikes even in a period of retreat and that the great majority of the unemployed workers solidarized themselves with the strikers. But nowhere were these strikes successfully coordinated and given a political character.

But all these experiences did not bring a turn in the German CP's policy. The various "rectifications" only created greater confusion because the principal features of this mistaken policy, such as the RGO, the conception of the social-democracy as the principal prop of capitalism, the notion of immediate revolutionary upsurge, etc., were maintained.

The elections of November 6, 1932, apparently proved the Kremlin right. The German CP obtained the greatest electoral victory of its history with 5,970,000 votes, or 16.9 per cent. The party leadership was intoxicated by the atmosphere of the victory. "Von Papen wants to exterminate Bolshevism," wrote *Die Rote Fahne*, "Six million voters have answered. This front of six million Communists has forced resignation of the von Papen government."

But von Papen was replaced by Schleicher. It was not possible to vanquish reaction and National Socialism with ballots, nor was an increased vote proof of the organization's solidity or its capacity for political struggle.

It was a fact that the Nazis suffered a setback—the loss of two million votes—in these last free elections before Hitler's seizure of power. A part of the big bourgeoisie and of the petty bourgeoisie seems to have returned to their traditional parties, moved by the hope that the international crisis was subsiding.

By means of a demagogic adventure, Hitler tried to compensate for this loss by making an incursion into the working class. At the same time, he wanted to prevent a large part of the SA from becoming demoralized and consequently turning to the

Communists. He saw his chance in sending the SA and National Socialist factory organizations into the Berlin transport workers' strike of November-December 1932.

The history of the Berlin transport workers' strike is an illustration of the disunity and degradation of the German workers' movement. The strike was decided on to ward off a threatened wage cut. In a vote, a majority of the workers declared themselves in favor of the strike but the statutory majority of 75 per cent was not obtained. The union leadership refused to recognize the strike. The German CP and the RGO nevertheless issued a strike call. In actual fact, all the transport workers obeyed the strike call. The strike aroused the general sympathy of the people of Berlin. Despite this, however, it was doomed to failure because the unions refused to pay strike relief to the strikers.

To the general surprise, the Nazis appeared on the scene, proclaiming that they wanted to support the strike. Picket groups comprising RGO members, antifascist groups, and SA were organized. They used the motorized units in common. Street rallies were organized. The grotesque spectacle could be seen of Communists and National Socialists standing side by side and shouting their slogans in unison amid the rattle of their collection boxes: "For the RGO strike fund!" "For the NSBO strike fund!" (*National Sozialistische Betriebszellen-Organisation*—the National Socialist organization in the factories). This united front provoked such revulsion that the initial sympathy was dissipated. The strike had to be called to a halt.

The Nazis' attempt to win the votes of the workers by participating in this strike misfired. But the Berlin workers' sympathy for the Communist party was put to a severe test by this united front directed against the unions, the social-democratic administration of the transport companies, and the social-democrat-dominated Berlin senate.

On January 31, 1933, the day after Hitler's seizure of power, the German CP called a meeting of the plant councils. Despite heavy attendance, no decision could be made to launch a mass political strike against Hitler because it was evident, as it had been on July 20, that a mass political strike could be carried off only if a decisive section of the unions supported the call. But the CP was isolated from the unions, and on this occasion also the union bureaucracy was able to sabotage the struggle without great difficulty. Hitler encountered no serious resistance.

It seemed then that the German CP wanted to change its tactic at the eleventh hour. Because it realized the disarray of the masses, it published an appeal on January 31 in which it offered to work with the social-democracy and the unions to execute

a general strike. But this offer was not consummated. There was nothing left for the Communist workers to do but join in the social-democratic protest demonstrations against Hitler's seizure of power and to carry out a united front over their leaders' heads.

When Hitler was already in the government and even after the Nazi march on Karl Liebknecht House, the CP central committee's headquarters, the Communist leaders kept on talking about the breakup of the fascist movement and boasting about the "offensive of the antifascist front." With respect to this situation, Thälmann wrote:

"But the period extending from the weeks and months preceding July 20, 1932, to January 22, 1933, [the day of the Nazi march on Karl Liebknecht House] was preparatory to an important upsurge in the formation of class forces. Previously, the von Papen-Hitler affair occurred coincident with a rising wave of National Socialism, but in the meantime the rate of revolutionary development surpassed the fascist advance among the masses and unfolded in the face of the first signs of breakup in the National Socialist camp. January 22 was also a sign of upsurge in class forces and was favorable for the proletarian revolution [!]." And still later, when the defeat of the German working class was an accomplished fact, one could read in the appeal of the KPD central committee on March 15, 1933: "Despite the government's declaration, March 5 was not a victory for fascism."

Thus the Stalinist German Communist Party, because of an improper perspective and incorrect strategy and tactics, led the German workers into the abyss of fascist barbarism.

IV. How to Defeat Fascism? The Only Road

After 1923, important changes had taken place in the Communist International. Following the defeat of the working class in Western Europe at the end of the postwar cycle, the isolation of the Soviet Union accelerated the appearance of bureaucratic degeneration. Because of objective conditions, the struggle of the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky against this degeneration was not crowned with success. It ended with Stalin's victory over the Left Opposition, over the party, and over the working class. This shift in the relationship of forces inside Russia had long-range consequences for the Comintern, in which the Russian bureaucracy held preeminent sway. The degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state went hand in hand with degeneration of the Comintern.

In the German CP, the Stalinist bureaucracy's devitalizing and demoralizing influence made itself felt in a particularly baneful way. The key to the international situation lay in Germany. Would the pendulum swing toward revolution or counterrevolution? That depended on the German CP. Once it had fallen into organizational and political subservience and been caught up in the anti-Marxist theories of Stalinism, the German CP leadership was no longer capable of applying Marxist-Leninist strategy. Instead of being corrected, every error was justified, and thus became the source of great new errors.

The Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist) in the German CP, born of the struggle against the Stalinization of the German CP, and in close union with the "Prussian opposition," conducted a struggle against the Stalinist executive committee of the Comintern and the German CP leadership completely subservient to it. With precision and great historical clarity, the Left Opposition explained the essence of fascism to the Communist workers and pointed out the revolutionary strategy and tactics that alone could defeat fascism. It criticized the Stalinist bureaucracy's unwitting contribution to fascist victory, and answered the questions posed by the events.

It stressed most of all to the Communist workers the fate in store for the German working class if the party leadership's erroneous policy led to failure in blocking the victory of fascism.

"From Fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job: once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a period of years. The Fascist agency does a thorough job When a state turns Fascist, it means first of all for the most part, that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of Fascism."²

"The coming to power of the German 'National Socialists' would mean above all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the disruption of its organizations, the extirpation of its belief in itself and in its future. Considering the far greater maturity and acuteness of the social contradictions in Germany, the hellish work of Italian Fascism would probably appear as a pale and almost humane experiment in comparison with the work of the German 'National Socialists.'³

"Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions; you cannot leave for any place; there are not enough passports for you. Should Fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank. Your salvation lies

in merciless struggle. And only a fighting unity with the social-democratic workers can bring victory.”⁴

The most important precondition for conducting the struggle against the mounting wave of fascism correctly and successfully was theoretical clarification of the essence of fascism, its historical role and its social tasks. This was of the greatest importance because the Comintern and the leadership of the German CP, caught in their own toils, strove continually to prove that there was “no principled difference between democracy and fascism.”

Trotsky took a position on this matter as early as 1929 in his article “The Austrian Crisis and Communism”:

“Fascism is the second proxy of the bourgeoisie. Like the social-democracy, and on an even greater scale, fascism has its own army, its interests and its logic of movement. We know that in Italy, fascism, in order to save and strengthen bourgeois society, was compelled to be violently antagonistic not only to the social-democracy but also to the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie . . . It should not be imagined that all the political organs of the bourgeoisie act in harmony. Fortunately, it is not so. Economic anarchy is complemented by political anarchy. Fascism, fed by the social-democracy, is compelled to split the latter’s skull to get to power.”⁵

In 1932, Trotsky again returned to this question in his pamphlet, *What Next?*, and deepened his argument against the way in which the Stalinists “mastered” this question:

“A contradiction does exist between democracy and Fascism. It is not at all ‘absolute,’ or, putting it in the language of Marxism, it doesn’t at all denote the rule of irreconcilable classes. But it does denote different systems of domination of one and the same class.”⁶

“In order to try to find a way out, the bourgeoisie must absolutely rid itself of the pressure exerted by the workers’ organizations, these must needs be eliminated, destroyed, utterly crushed.

“At this juncture, the historic role of Fascism begins. It sets on its feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and who are ever in dread of being forced down into its ranks; it organizes and militarizes them at the expense of finance capital, under the cover of the official government, and it directs them to the extirpation of proletarian organizations from the most revolutionary to the most conservative.

“Fascism is not merely a system of reprisals, of brutal force, and of police terror. Fascism is a particular system of government based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society. The task of Fascism lies not

only in destroying the Communist advance guard but in holding the entire class in a state of forced disunity. To this end, the physical annihilation of the most revolutionary section of the workers does not suffice. It is also necessary to smash all independent and voluntary organizations, to demolish all the defensive bulwarks of the proletariat, and to uproot whatever has been achieved during three quarters of a century by the social-democracy and the trade unions. For, in the last analysis, the Communist Party also bases itself on these achievements."⁷

The Stalinists were unwilling to recognize any difference between democracy and fascism and therefore it automatically followed for them that there was no difference between the social-democratic and fascist parties. For the German CP there were only "different forms" of fascism and fascist movements. The "theory" of social fascism, the prime example of the Stalinist ignorance of how to assess class forces and relationships concretely, had a ruinous effect among the German workers. It deepened the chasm between the German CP and the social-democratic workers and prevented the application of the strategy and tactics of the united front, which, among other things, had been clearly worked out at the Third World Congress of the Comintern.

The Left Opposition waged a vigorous struggle against this grossly false "theory." This struggle runs like a red thread through the documents of the International Opposition: "No matter how true it is that the social-democracy by its whole policy is preparing the blossoming of Fascism, it is no less true that Fascism comes forward as a deadly threat primarily to that same social-democracy, all of whose magnificence is inextricably bound up with parliamentary-democratic-pacifist forms and methods of government."⁸

"The social-democracy is incapable of taking power and does not want to take it. The bourgeoisie finds, however, that the disciplined organization of the workers by the social-democracy involves it in too much expense. The bourgeoisie as a whole needs fascism to hold the social-democracy in check, and if necessary to throw it on the scrap heap."

"Just as revolutionary situations developed more than once out of the conflict between liberalism and monarchy, which later went over the heads of both opponents, so a revolutionary situation can develop out of the clash between the social-democracy and fascism—two antagonistic proxies of the bourgeoisie—which will pass over the heads of both of them.

"The proletarian revolutionary would be worthless if he did not understand, in the epoch of the bourgeois revolution, how to estimate the conflict between the liberals and the monarchy, and instead of utilizing the struggle in a revolutionary manner,

threw the two opponents into one pot. The Communist is not worth a copper who, in the face of the collisions between Fascism and the social-democracy, shouts down this conflict with the naked formula of social-fascism, which has no content at all . . .

"What does social-fascism really mean? No matter how shrewd the honest 'theoreticians' make themselves look, they can reply to this question with nothing but the statement that the social-democracy is ready to defend the foundations of the bourgeois regime and its own positions in the bourgeois regime with the aid of armed power against the workers. But isn't this the general characteristic of all 'democratic' parties without exception? . . .

"But fascism, unless one wishes to play a senseless game with words is not the general characteristic of bourgeois parties, but constitutes a specific bourgeois party, which has specific conditions and tasks that are opposed to the other bourgeois parties."9

In spite of much talk, the procedure followed by the German CP leadership was continual sabotage of the workers' united front. With the mad formula of "the united front from below," it gave aid and comfort to the reformist bureaucrats and side-stepped the obligation of taking a stand for or against a fighting united front.

The CP bureaucracy fought the Left Opposition's appeals and proposals for the formation of a class front with falsifications and slander. These slanderous charges were expressed rather vividly, for example, in an article by Walter Ulbricht in the September-October 1932 issue of *Die Internationale*. The excerpt quoted here is representative of the innumerable and indescribable attacks on the Left Opposition.

"This demand for a policy of forming blocs is at the same time the expression of a lack of faith in the creation of a united front of the working class. In the place of a working-class united front, in the sense of a common struggle, the Trotskyites want a grand alliance between the Communist Party and the social-democracy [!], that is, they give up unmasking the social-democratic policy, which amounts to blocking the struggle for proletarian dictatorship."

But despite all these slanders, the Left Opposition always put the united front first in its propaganda as the vital question for the German workers and it continually and uncompromisingly unmasked the empty words of the so-called "red united front."

"It is necessary to show by deeds a complete readiness to make a bloc with the social-democrats against the Fascists in all cases in which they will accept a bloc. To say to the social-democratic workers: 'Cast your leaders aside and join our

‘non-party’ united front,’ means to add just one more hollow phrase to a thousand others. We must understand how to tear the workers away from their leaders in reality. But the reality today is—the struggle against Fascism.”¹⁰

In a letter from the national leadership of the German Left Opposition to the central committee of the German CP, for example, one could read with respect to the united front: “To block the victory of fascism, we must organize united revolutionary working-class action . . .

“We make the following proposals: that the German CP come to an immediate agreement with all political groups, unions and workers’ organizations, declaring their readiness to struggle against fascism with the objective of launching a joint appeal for organizing united action against fascism . . .”

On December 1, 1931, one could again read in *Die Permanente Revolution*: “‘Forward Toward the Social-Democratic and Unionized Masses!’ is the most appropriate slogan if the struggle is not to end in defeat. A united front with the SPD and ADGB is the slogan of the hour.”

Leon Trotsky in his incomparable writings always urged the “Communist workers” to struggle inside their own party for the application of the Leninist tactic of the revolutionary united front:

“Without so much as hiding or mitigating our opinion of the social-democratic leaders, we may and we must say to the social-democratic workers, ‘Since, on the one hand, you are willing to fight together with us; and since on the other, you are still unwilling to break with your leaders, here is what we suggest: For your leaders to join us in a common struggle for such and such practical aims, in such and such a manner; as for us, we, Communists, are ready.’ Can anything be more simple, more palpable, more convincing?”¹¹

“The social crisis will inevitably produce deep cleavages within the social-democracy. The radicalization of the masses will affect the social-democrats. We will inevitably have to make agreements with various social-democratic organizations and factions against Fascism, putting definite conditions to the leaders . . . We must return from the empty official’s phrase about the united front to the policy of united front as it was formulated by Lenin and always applied by the Bolsheviks in 1917.”¹² “Complete independence of the Communist organization and press, complete freedom of Communist criticism, the same for the social-democracy and the trade unions. Only contemptible opportunists can allow the freedom of the Communist party to be limited (for example, like entrance into the Kuomintang). We are not of their number.

"No retraction of our criticism of the social-democracy. No forgetting of all that has been. The whole historical reckoning, including the reckoning for Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, will be presented at the proper time, just as the Russian Bolsheviks finally presented a general reckoning to the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries for the baiting, calumny, imprisonment and murder of the workers, soldiers and peasants.

"But we presented our general reckoning to them two months after we had utilized the partial reckoning between Kerensky and Kornilov, between the 'democrats' and the Fascists—in order to drive back the Fascists all the more certainly. Only thanks to this circumstance were we victorious."¹³

The leadership of the German CP paid no attention to the warnings of the Left Opposition, rejected its proposals, thus setting the stage for defeat without a struggle in 1933.

On March 5, 1933, when Hitler already held power and the leading cadres of the German workers' movement were already delivered over to bloody terror in the concentration camps, the Communist International published an appeal in which, without any criticism of the errors committed and without any discussion, it effected a 180-degree turn in a bureaucratic manner. But it was too late. In that appeal, it says:

"In spite of this, the executive committee of the Communist International orders . . . all Communist parties to try once again to form a united front with the social-democratic worker masses through the intermediary of the social-democratic parties.

"While taking account of the peculiarities in the relationships between Communist and social-democratic parties as well as the diversity of concrete tasks posed by the working class of each country, and of the fact that it is in the specific context of each country that specific actions against the bourgeoisie can be carried out with most success, the executive committee of the Communist International recommends to the Communist parties of every country that they propose common actions against fascism and the capitalist offensive to the central committees of the social-democratic parties.

"For the acceptance and practical realization of these proposals . . . the executive committee of the Communist International considers it possible to recommend to the Communist parties that they abandon all attacks on the social-democratic organizations during the joint action against capital and fascism."

The Left Opposition responded to this maneuver of the Stalinist bureaucracy in an article by Trotsky in its German language *émigré* organ, *Unser Wort*, which had been established in the interim and was being published in Prague:

"In a special appeal of the Executive of March 5: 'To the

Workers of All Countries!,' the Stalinists do not say one word about social-fascism as the main enemy. They no longer speak about the greater discovery of their leader: 'The social-democracy and Fascism are not antipodes but twins . . .' They do not breathe a word about the inadmissibility of the united front from above . . . Thus do artificial, false and charlatanesque theories founder in the fury of the historical tempest."

"'Taking into account the peculiarities of each country' and of the impossibility which allegedly flows from them of organizing the united front on an international scale . . . the Stalinist bureaucracy recommends to the national Communist parties to address proposals for a united front to the 'Central Committees of the social-democratic parties.' Only yesterday this was proclaimed a capitulation to social-fascism! Thus do the great lessons of Stalinism for the past four years fly under the table into the waste basket. Thus a whole political system is reduced to dust."

"The conditions for the united front put by the Comintern for all the countries . . . present nothing new, on the contrary, they are the schematized and bureaucratized reproduction of the slogans that the Left Opposition formulated much more clearly and concretely two and one half years ago and for which it was registered in the camp of social-fascism. The united front on such bases could yield decisive results in Germany; but for that end it should have been carried out in time. Time is an important factor in politics."

"Breaking with the traditions of Marxism and of Bolshevism, they recommend to the Communist parties, in case the united front is to be realized, to 'abandon all attacks against the social-democratic organizations during the joint action' . . . To abandon all attacks (!) upon the social-democracy (what a shameful formula!) means to abandon the freedom of political criticism that is the principal function of the revolutionary party."¹⁴

The attitude toward the lessons of the last five years of the Weimar Republic is still a touchstone of revolutionary communism today. Moreover, the explanation of the horrendous errors of Stalinism is a precondition for the development of a revolutionary strategy for our epoch. "It is impossible to go forward if one is incapable of learning the lessons of the tragic errors and defeats of the past" (Trotsky).

NOTES

1. Trotsky, *What Next?*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1932, p. 12
2. *Ibid.*, p. 30
3. Trotsky, *Germany—The Key to the International Situation*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1932, p. 17
4. *Ibid.*, p. 41
5. "Communism and the Austrian Crisis," *The Militant*, January 15, 1930.
6. *What Next?*, p. 29
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13
8. *The Turn in the CI and the German Situation*, The Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Ceylon, 1958, p. 20
9. "The Austrian Crisis," *The Militant*, January 15, 1930.
10. *The Turn in the CI*, p. 35.
11. *What Next?*, p. 54.
12. *The Turn in the CI*, p. 21.
13. *Germany—The Key to the International Situation*, pp. 39-40.
14. "The Tragedy of the German Proletariat," *The Militant*, April 8, 1933.

6.

THE CHINESE AND INDOCHINESE REVOLUTIONS

By Nahuel Moreno

It is not my purpose to argue whether the Chinese Revolution was more or less important than the Russian. At the same time they constitute without doubt the two transcendent revolutionary events of the century.

While the October Revolution began the epoch of world socialist revolution, the Chinese Revolution definitively broke the imperialist equilibrium. It temporarily transferred the center of the world revolution to the underdeveloped and colonial nations. It ended the isolation of the Soviet Union and thus posed the immediate possibility of a federation of Eurasian socialist states, a possible bridge to a world federation of socialist states. It forced Yankee Imperialism to develop a worldwide strategy to confront the colonial revolution. It indirectly produced two counterrevolutionary wars, the Korean and Indochinese. It has made the destruction of imperialism within its own borders, as the only way to avert a nuclear war, an urgent necessity on the world political agenda. Finally, it has posed the problem of problems, that of a unified strategy and organization by which the revolutionaries of the entire planet may confront imperialism.

The existence of People's China, with all of the crises and contradictions that the cultural revolution presents, again raises in all its acuteness the problem of the method and form of government most effective to cope with the transitional stage from capitalism to socialism, principally in the backward countries. And it demonstrates that there is no solution other than workers' democracy to avert or overcome grave economic, political, and cultural crises.

The present Vietnamese war, an indirect consequence of the Chinese Revolution, involves the fate of China and the world revolution. The Indochinese workers and peasants have demonstrated, arms in hand, that it is possible to face up to imperialism and to defeat it. This defeat will in all likelihood be the beginning of the end for imperialism.

I. The Chinese Revolution Is a Victory of the World Revolution As a Whole

The world revolution has followed an uneven and combined course. China, despite its colossal importance, is no more than a part of this process. For, contrary to what the heroic Chinese revolutionaries and the New Left which echoes them may think, the victory was not won only by the Chinese revolutionaries and the Chinese masses but by all the world's exploited. Without the consciously or unconsciously revolutionary action of the workers of the entire world, and principally those in the capitalist centers, it could not have triumphed. The history of the Yugoslav Communists has been repeated. Mosha Pijade wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Fable of Soviet Aid*, in which he proved that the Yugoslav Revolution got no aid from the USSR. The pamphlet that needs to be written about the victory of the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions is not yet begun: the truth about the aid to them from the world revolution. When Mao and Giap, in accordance with protocol, say that they were victorious thanks to the aid they received from the USSR and the other socialist countries, they are telling a half-truth. It is the most pernicious of lies because it masks the crucial factor: the revolution or pressure of the Western masses.

The Second Chinese Revolution (1925-27) began as a reflection of the revolutionary upsurge in the period following the first world war and the Russian Revolution. The recession of the world revolution brought on the victory of Stalinism, and this produced the failure of the British General Strike and of the Chinese Revolution, which was moving toward a working-class seizure of power. From 1935 to 1939 there was a renewed revolutionary upsurge with the Spanish Civil War, the great French strikes, and the massive unionization of the industrial workers in the United States. In China the struggle against the Japanese invaders and the civil war formed part of this new upsurge. In contrast to the outcome in Western Europe, it was not defeated or derailed.

With the conclusion of the second imperialist world war, a new revolutionary upsurge began—touched off both by the spectacular crisis of imperialism and by the new revolutionary wave in Western Europe. The new civil war in China and the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution were directly related to this new upsurge. *Mao's triumph cannot be explained except by the revolutionary pressure of the European workers and the attitude of the Americans in the armed forces.*

The sectors of world imperialism that survived the crisis, and

Yankee Imperialism in particular, concentrated all their forces on halting the workers' revolution in Western Europe, primarily in France and Italy. The working class of these countries had *de facto* power in their hands when, at the Kremlin's order, the liberation movements and the Communist parties—together with the national bourgeoisies and Yankee Imperialism—blocked the seizure of power. The price imperialism had to pay for this was to let the Soviet Union hold sway in Eastern Europe and permit the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions to triumph.

In this, the American workers, so much defamed by the New Left, played a role of the first magnitude. The fact that our American class brothers have not posed the question of power in their country has often been mistakenly construed to mean that they have played no role in the revolutionary triumphs of the postwar period. How then can it be explained that Yankee Imperialism did not convert China into another Vietnam at that time? The only answer is that the American workers in the ranks of the armed forces were not ready to serve, once the war was ended, as a counterrevolutionary force. Yankee diplomacy then found itself forced to take into account two factors in its China policy: first, that its main objective was the halting of the workers' revolution in Western Europe and the reestablishment of capitalism there; second, that it was impossible to mobilize Yankee soldiers for a counterrevolutionary war right at that time. Without these two factors, the Chinese revolutionists would not have been able to win so easily in the civil war or to take the cities. The Yankee army had more than enough material power to maintain itself in the big cities of the coast on a much grander scale than Japan had. If it did not do so, it is not for the reasons adduced by the American reactionaries—that Truman and Marshall were some kind of imbeciles—but because they were convinced that it was impossible to pursue such a policy at that time.

If they are able to follow such a policy in Vietnam today, this also is a consequence of the state of the world revolution and of its uneven development: the class struggle in Europe and the United States has been stabilized; there is no immediate danger of workers' revolution in Europe or of mass desertions by the Yankee soldiers. Having restored order in their rear, the imperialists can mount a brutal attack on the colonial revolution, as they are now doing in Vietnam.

II. The Second Chinese Revolution

In 1911 the fall of the last emperor marked the beginning of

the bourgeois revolution in China. The corrupt compradore class and the rachitic national bourgeoisie were to prove incapable of resolving the historic tasks on the agenda: national independence and agrarian revolution. More than that, their impotence would be manifested in a retrogression: China was in fact divided into regions controlled by warlords subservient to the various imperialisms. Thus, instead of resolving the two great historic problems posed, the Revolution of 1911 only added yet another: the achievement of national unity.

The first world war produced the Second Chinese Revolution. It began in 1919 with a fervent anti-imperialist mobilization of the students and professors, the May 4 Movement against the Versailles treaties. The war had brought about a considerable industrial development, which led to an increase of two million in the proletariat between 1916 and 1922. In the same period, 200,000 workers had been sent to work in France. When they returned, they served as the leaven of the working-class ferment. In 1917, the first modern trade union had just been founded in China. In a short space of time, in 1919, the trade-union movement joined with the May 4 Movement in a series of strikes in Shanghai and other cities.

Linked to all this was the influence of the triumphant Russian Revolution. Marxism, in its Leninist form, began to penetrate China. The leaders of the May 4 Movement, with Chen Tu-hsiu at their head, became Marxists, and in 1921 founded the Communist Party with about fifty members. Chen was elected secretary-general in absentia. The Kuomintang, the bourgeoisie's party led by Sun Yat-sen, was also to experience a resurgence. The probable reason for this was its change in policy. While of course bringing up the rear, still it felt the influence of the new revolutionary process. Its former policy had been to try to play one warlord off against another, and it had failed and been totally prostrated until 1919.

The working class was the backbone of the new, resurgent, revolutionary process, and it was joined shortly by the peasant movement. The revolution was to be a workers' and peasants' revolution led by the proletariat. In January 1922, the strike of the Hongkong longshoremen broke out, ending in victory in March as the British were forced to recognize the union and grant a wage increase. In 1922, as a consequence of this working-class upsurge, the first national congress of trade unionists was held under the leadership of the victorious longshoremen. This congress represented about 230,000 members. In central and northern China, the organization of the workers

revolved around the railroadmen, who held their first congress in 1924. In Shanghai, China's largest city, there were 40,000 workers organized in twenty-four unions at the beginning of 1923. Isaacs describes the situation this way: "In 1918 there were twenty-five recorded strikes, involving some 150,000 workers in all parts of the country. The movement grew with astonishing rapidity and militancy. On May Day 1924, 100,000 workers marched through the streets of Shanghai and twice that number in Canton. Contemporary reports describe how in Wuchang, Hanyan, and Hankow, despite martial law, red flags appeared over working-class quarters."¹

Like its shadow, the peasant movement began to raise its head, following the lead of the workers' movement. In 1923 there was already a Kwantung province peasant association in Canton.

The Chinese Communist Party was forced by the Russian emissaries, who in turn reflected the Stalinist bureaucracy, to enter the Kuomintang and accept the political and organizational discipline imposed on them, first by Sun Yat-sen and, after his death, by Chiang Kai-shek. Soviet Stalinism, moreover, established close and direct contact with the Kuomintang and with Chiang Kai-shek, whom it helped in founding the Whampoa Military Academy in 1924. This capitulationist policy was pursued in the name of the opportunist theory propagated by Stalin that a bourgeois-democratic revolution was on the agenda in China and would be led by the bourgeoisie. The independence of the workers and peasants and that of the Chinese CP was sacrificed to this conception and program.

In the meantime, the workers and peasants moved further and further away from the bourgeois nationalist party. There were great working-class struggles throughout 1925. In April a strike broke out against the Japanese factories in Shanghai. The Yankee and English police fired on the anti-Japanese demonstrators, killing several. In retribution, the workers declared the general strike of June 1. In the meantime, strikes began to break out against the Chinese employers. This upsurge culminated, from June 19 to October 10, in a general strike in Hong-kong and a boycott of English goods in Canton. This movement left the actual power in the hands of the worker-pickets, the strike committees, and the revolutionary cadets of Canton.

In March 1926, Chiang Kai-shek counterattacked, turning the Second Congress of the Kuomintang into a *coup d'état* within the governing party. He demanded that the Communists cease campaigning for their views inside the party and that they turn

over a list of all their members. On the pretext that he was preparing a military invasion of the north against the warlords, he succeeded in obtaining a grant of full powers. Stalin forced the Communist Party to accept these conditions. Stalin's agent Borodin urged that those Russian advisers who had incurred Chiang's displeasure be removed and replaced with more amenable colleagues. On July 29, Chiang declared martial law in Canton. All activity by the workers' movement was forbidden and more than fifty workers were murdered. The landlords began a counteroffensive in the countryside.

Shortly after March 1926, the political bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with Trotsky voting against, approved the admission of the Kuomintang into the Communist International as a "sympathizer party." The request which Chen, the secretary-general, made to the Russian emissaries in Canton that the workers' movement be given 5,000 guns from the Russian arms in the city was denied.² In October of the same year the Soviet Communist Party leadership sent a telegram to The Chinese Communist Party ordering it to rein in the peasant movement in order not to frighten the generals. On January 1, the Chinese national government was organized in Wuhan, and its head, Wang, a representative of the left Kuomintang, appointed two Communist ministers. From this moment on, the Left Opposition in Moscow raised a hue and cry for the Communist Party to break with the Kuomintang and prepare to seize power. Karol points out that "Trotsky was also the first in the Comintern to speak of the necessity of creating the 'peasant soviets' dear to Mao."³

The march of Chiang's army toward the north provoked, however, a new revolutionary wave. In Hunan, the trade unions spread out to new districts and increased their membership from 60,000 to 150,000. In Wuhan, after the advance of Chiang's army, their numbers reached 300,000. The peasants did not lag behind. In Hunan at the end of November, fifty-four peasant districts were organized with a total of a million members. In January 1927, this number rose to two million.

"Now at the end of three months, the Communist party had organized 600,000 workers in Shanghai and found itself in a position to issue a general strike order . . . The first insurrection failed. Without arms and without training the workers did not know how to make themselves masters of the city. They had to learn by experience the necessity of forming a nucleus of armed workers . . . Chou En-lai and the famous Shanghai leaders, Chao Shih-yen, Ku Shun-chang and Lo Yi-ming, succeeded in organizing 50,000 strike pickets and in finding

centers in the French concession where 2,000 militants received secret military training. An 'Iron Troop' of 300 riflemen armed with contraband mausers was formed and this was the Shanghai workers' sole armed force. On March 21, 1927, the Communists launched a strike which led to the closing of all the factories and brought the workers for the first time in their lives to the barricades. First they took the police headquarters, then the arsenal, later the military barracks, and they won the day. There were 5,000 armed workers; they formed six battalions of revolutionary troops and proclaimed 'citizens' power.' It was the most notable *coup d'état* in modern Chinese history." Thus Karol recounts the workers' triumph in Shanghai, which left the power in their hands.

One day later Chiang entered the city and was given a hero's welcome by the Communist Party. This is how he was able to prepare his *coup d'état* against the workers at his ease and convenience. It came on April 12 and took the form of a massacre comparable to that of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965. This *coup* definitively decapitated the Chinese working class.

III. The Lessons of the Failure

The Stalinist betrayal - unconditional support to the Kuomintang - was carried out under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party leadership, which itself was opposed to the policy, though then unaware of Trotsky's views. The formation of the party had been taking place during the heat of the workers' and peasants' mobilization. From a membership of fifty in 1921, it had risen to lead the Shanghai insurrection. The development of its leadership had proceeded apace with its growth in numbers and influence. This leadership had formulated a theory and program for the revolution very similar to that of Trotsky. A Western scholar has called it proto-Trotskyism. Both Chen and his disciple Peng maintained that what was on the agenda in China was a workers' revolution against the bourgeoisie, a revolution which would carry out the bourgeois-democratic tasks. At every opportunity they stressed the need of cutting free from the Kuomintang and adopting a revolutionary line toward the taking of power.

Another tendency with its own coloration began to develop in the party, Maoism. This tendency placed great stress on the peasant movement. It worked perfectly well within the party, which had a Bolshevik structure in which ample internal freedom

was combined with discipline in action. The outlook was for an ever greater integration of these two tendencies under the undisputed hegemony of Chen.

On the basis of the discipline of the Communist International and the prestige of the USSR, Stalin unfortunately succeeded in imposing his line. In the face of such pressure, Chen gave in to Moscow's order. Thus a contradictory situation developed: Stalin succeeded in imposing his policy but not his men, for Chen's prestige was too great and the workers' movement too strong for Stalin to be able to force acceptance of his "made-in-Moscow" bureaucrats. Moreover, the Communist International was not entirely bureaucratized at that time.

The Second Chinese Revolution not only showed that a workers' movement could lead an agrarian and national revolution, but that the formation and development of a highly qualified revolutionary Marxist party is possible in a short time, in the course of the revolutionary process itself. The theoretical, political, and organizational richness of the Chinese party proved this. The Stalinist betrayal produced a historic working-class defeat, and as a consequence the chance was lost to complete the construction of a Chinese Bolshevik party.

Thus the consequences of the Second Chinese Revolution contrasted with those of the Russian Revolution of 1905. The 1905 revolution did not remove the Russian proletariat from the scene. On the contrary, in the historic sense, it strengthened its influence and helped bring the formation of the Bolshevik Party to fruition; in a certain sense it created the Bolshevik Party. The ultimate cause of these combined misfortunes in China is not to be sought in the defeat of the working class (it was to demonstrate on several occasions its capacity for recovery) but in the triumphant course of the world counterrevolution and its reflection in the international workers' movement—Stalinism. It was Stalinism which was directly responsible for the fact that the Chinese failure in 1927 did not have the same effect as the 1905 Revolution.

I point this out because various theories have been propounded to explain the reasons for the failure of the Chinese workers and why a revolutionary Marxist party could not be formed: because the proletariat was not a revolutionary class; because there was not sufficient cultural tradition for the development of Marxism; or because the geographical and political conditions (a vast country without unity or a national political life) blocked the political development of the proletariat and its party. The Second Chinese Revolution, at once magnificent and tragic, proves all

these theories profoundly false. Social, cultural, or geographical-political factors do not explain why the Chinese proletariat did not raise its head again and why it did not complete the organization of a revolutionary Marxist party. Stalinism and world counterrevolution are the real explanation.

IV. The Consequences of the Defeat

Stalin responded to the disaster in China by ordering a putschist line: strike for the seizure of power. This line completely failed to take into account the setback the workers had suffered, and was to be the cause of new disasters for the mass movement.

The workers and militants responded empirically to the counterrevolution. Rather than allowing themselves to be liquidated, the Communists in the army chose to revolt along with their troops, and began the armed struggle. Thus they seized the city of Nanchang and created the Red Army. Peng Pui, the party's peasant leader, joined the Red Army and retreated with it to the peasant zones of Haipeng and Lupeng and there founded the first Soviet government, organizing peasant militias and dividing up the land. Mao began to promote peasant soviets in violation of the Stalinist line, which did not authorize them until September, and launched a peasant insurrection in Hunan, the August Harvest Rising, which failed. This, together possibly with his audacity in the launching of peasant soviets, cost him his posts in the party leadership and even put his party membership in jeopardy. This new course culminated in the Canton putsch ordered by Stalin in an attempt to salvage his prestige. It was a total failure.

The Stalinists, however, did not change their course. Instead they adopted on a world scale an adventurist and putschist line, seeking in this way to respond to the counterrevolutionary danger represented in the USSR by the Kulaks and in the West by the reaction which was to culminate in the onslaught of Nazism. The Communist parties received the order to strike for power, to ignore the workers' minimum demands, to refuse united fronts with other working-class and anti-imperialist currents and not to work in the reformist trade unions, which embraced the majority of the workers.

This policy had grim consequences for the Chinese Revolution. Instead of unifying all the sectors of the movements opposed to Chiang and the Japanese encroachments then underway, Stalinist ultraleftism either left them each to their separate

fate, or else, lacking the least appreciation of the relationship of forces, it flung them in offensives against the cities. This was the opposite of the revolutionary movement's previous course, which had combined the anti-imperialist struggle, the workers' movement, the revolutionary soldiers, and the peasant movement into a single process. Chiang proceeded to defeat each revolutionary sector separately at his convenience, for the Stalinists were floundering in the inanity of orders issued from Moscow which had no relevance to the Chinese reality.

With this was combined the Stalinists' struggle to transform the Chinese Communist Party into a Stalinist party. Prior to 1927 they were unsuccessful. The CP followed their policy but it was not a Stalinist party; for Stalinism fundamentally is neither a theory nor a policy but a bureaucratic caste, which draws its political and social privileges from its intimate and dependent connection with the Soviet bureaucracy. For this reason, Stalinization of any national party means domination of its party apparatus by a privileged bureaucracy dependent on the Soviet bureaucracy and trained in Moscow. The 1927 defeat began this stage in the Chinese CP. Moscow now did not stop at imposing its policy; it imposed its right-hand men. On August 7, 1927, Chen was removed from his position as secretary-general, thus beginning the march of Moscow's men toward total control of the Communist Party. The Sixth Party Congress was held in Moscow from June to September 1928 and completed the total Stalinization of the party.

The first great Stalinist crime had to do with the labor movement. After the defeat, the latter retreated to the Yellow or reformist, unions and from there defended itself against the bosses' offensive in a series of economic strikes. In 1928 in Shanghai alone, 120 strikes for better wages and reduced working hours broke out. The Stalinist CP, which was busy trying to send its own red unions into ill-fated political strikes, did not intervene in these struggles. The Chinese Trotskyists headed by Chen, persecuted as they were both by Chiang and the Stalinists, could do little. Thus the opportunity presented by this revival in the workers' movement was lost.

In 1931, the Japanese occupation of China began, starting in Manchuria. The Stalinists refused to see that the immediate enemy was Japanese imperialism. All imperialisms are alike, they said, and should be so treated. When the Japanese army laid siege to Shanghai early in 1932, the Chinese army force stationed there rebelled against Chiang's order to evacuate the city and resisted heroically for two months before retreating.

This roused a wave of anti-Japanese fervor throughout China. The Stalinists paid no attention to this anti-imperialist movement, which they categorized as social-democratic, and gave no help or support to the rebellious army, allowing Chiang's forces to crush it mercilessly. Moscow's men were too busy with their revolution against all national and foreign exploiters to see the importance of the national movement of resistance to the Japanese occupation.

The Stalinist ultraleft policy was also disastrous for the peasant movement, which from 1925 on had continued ceaselessly to develop by leaps and bounds. After the defeat, it resumed its course. Along with the first Soviet government founded by Peng Pui, we find the peasant base established by Mao in the mountains of Chingkanshan with his remaining troops. From there the movement steadily advanced. A year later it had already occupied a part of the province of Kiangsi. It was distinguished from Peng Pui's movement by its emphasis on the military aspects of the struggle and on the method of guerrilla warfare. This would permit it an ever greater development.

The Stalinists, whose policy kept them from linking up this struggle with the workers' movement in the cities, almost brought disaster on the red peasant armies. In mid-June 1930 they ordered the Red Army to begin an offensive against the cities. They occupied the city of Changsha. Six days later they had to evacuate it, but the army laid siege to the city. Imperturbable, the Stalinists ordered Mao's forces to assist in the siege. Thus the Communist armed forces on orders from their leaders left their peasant bases to engage in a military adventure. On September 13, Mao broke the Stalinist discipline and returned to his peasant bases. This saved the peasant movement, and, on the basis of the guerrilla warfare method, it continued its expansion. This violation of Stalinist discipline in China soon permitted the creation of the Soviet Republic of China on November 7, 1931, in Jui-chi. It was not an artificial creation of Mao, for, according to Karol, it exercised "real control over one-sixth of Chinese territory, commanded an army of 145,000 men which was soon to double its 'effectives.'" Its policy on the land question was forthrightly revolutionary: "The land of the large landowners was to be purely and simply confiscated, while that of the rich peasants was to be distributed but not in its entirety: the rich were authorized to keep enough land to feed their families."

At the time, despite his position as president of the Soviet Republic, the Chinese and worldwide Stalinist movement considered Mao a second-rate figure. The bureaucrats carried much

more weight in the party hierarchy and they continued with Moscow's cherished policy of making a revolutionary impact on the cities. Mao repaid this attitude by not letting them participate in the formation of the Soviet Republic. There were in fact two factions in the Communist Party which completely ignored each other: Moscow's men in the cities and the Maoists in the countryside.

By the end of 1934, Chiang had succeeded in decisively defeating the peasant Soviet Republic, forcing Mao to withdraw to the north. The Long March signified the historic defeat of the peasants of the south, which brought to a close the cycle opened by the Second Chinese Revolution. It was the Stalinist policy that brought on this series of defeats of the working class, the anti-imperialist movement, the Communist armies and, finally, the peasant movement. But Mao's policy was also responsible because it disregarded the importance of building a revolutionary party, unity with Chen's Trotskyists, and struggle against the Stalinists' criminal policy in order to unite all the revolutionary movements against Chiang and the Japanese imperialists.

But neither the Stalinist policy nor Mao's or Chen's errors by themselves totally explain the 1934 defeat. All in all, Mao had a force equivalent to the force which in 1945 enabled him to defeat Chiang. The reason is that in 1934 the counterrevolution was on the offensive throughout the world and, as a consequence, the Chiang regime and imperialism were much more formidable. In 1945, it was Chiang and the imperialists who were in decline and the revolution which was on the rise.

During the Long March, the Chinese Communist Party, which had led the Shanghai insurrection and which had produced Mao's Soviet Republic, was reduced to almost nothing. Chiang had succeeded in defeating the workers', anti-imperialist, and peasant movements and had virtually liquidated the CP. On a dead body the parasites die. With the practical extinction of the Chinese Communist Party, Moscow's men disappeared. Leadership of the party fell into the hands of the Mao wing which, basing itself on its armed forces and the peasantry, succeeded with great hardship in surviving as a nomadic party and army. After 1935, when Mao took over the leadership of the party, there were no more Stalinist leaders in China, no more bureaucratic agents of the Kremlin.

With this statement I return to my original definition: Stalinism is not a theory of the revolution nor a certain conception of the party but a parasitic growth, a social phenomenon, a bureaucratic apparatus dependent on Moscow. While Maoism could

have all of the Stalinist vices and conceptions, it was not the same thing—to the good fortune of the Chinese Revolution, it could never be a parasitic, bureaucratic growth dependent on Moscow. Its key feature was to have not a Stalinist bureaucratic, but a revolutionary agrarian character.

In China, world Stalinism would have to be satisfied with imposing its policy on, or urging it on, men who were not its own. Thus the previous relationship with Chen was to be repeated: Moscow commanded not its own men but a handful of agrarian revolutionaries with a Marxist past and Stalinist ideological and organizational concepts. One of the effects of the final defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution was to be the disappearance of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy.

V. The Objective Bases of the Third Chinese Revolution: Decline and Permanent Counterrevolution

The capitalist and imperialist regime is characterized by periodic upsets of the equilibrium and *status quo* it has achieved. These upsets are the logical result of its own laws. Such changes may be either quantitative or qualitative. The offensive of the Yankee exploiters against their workers during the decade of the twenties represented quantitative change; the change that produced the great crisis of 1929 was a qualitative one. If we give the name counterrevolution to the leaps and qualitative changes, the abrupt breaking of the equilibrium that the exploiters execute in their relationships with exploited classes and peoples, we must realize that there it has an uneven and combined development. There are some countries, chiefly the most backward, which mercilessly and unceasingly bear the brunt of the exploiter offensive. China is the most illustrative example of this. From 1911 on, imperialism, the bourgeoisie, and the landlords were unable to achieve an equilibrium, however unstable, for any number of years. From 1911 on, the counterrevolutionary offensive constantly provoked national and civil wars.

Under the regime of the imperialists and the national exploiters, the situation of the Chinese workers steadily worsened. The regime, as Isaacs has said, offered them no alternative but an ever worsening situation. Let us take a look at this process, which is key to an understanding of the Chinese Revolution. For the struggle against imperialism, the fall of the empire meant a turn for the worse. China was forced to abandon the

offensive posture it had assumed as a semicolonial country trying to recover its independence by liquidating the foreign concessions and had to go over to a defensive posture, blocking total colonization. Through the agency of the warlords there began a stage of semicolonization of different regions, of Latin-Americanization, of division into spheres of influence with military chiefs who reflected the interests of the various imperialisms. This process acquired its full scope as the move toward colonization crystallized in the Japanese invasion, which baldly and directly aimed at making China a Japanese colony.

Instead of achieving national independence and unity, the corrupt Chinese bourgeoisie had brought the country to the point of direct colonization. The imperialist regime produced in turn the following stages in China: from the preceding century to the fall of the dynasty, semicolonization (principally of the port cities); after the fall of the dynasty, dismemberment of the country and semicolonization of its territory; after the failure of the Second Revolution, direct colonization by Japanese imperialism.

With regard to bourgeois development, the situation was similar. The great industrial development in the coastal region, sparked by the war, soon turned out to be ephemeral. First, the great 1929 crisis and, second, the Japanese invasion that followed wiped out Chinese industry, although a great Japanese industry developed in Manchuria. In the aftermath of the second world war, this situation was aggravated by the hopeless crisis of the bourgeois economy, which was manifested in the most galloping of inflations. ". . . 70 per cent of the budget was devoted to the army . . ." "One American dollar was worth (in Chinese dollars)—in June 1947, 36,000; August 1947, 44,000; October 1947, 165,000; May 1948, 1,000,000; beginning of August 1948, 10,000,000 . . ."4

"The inflation led to complete prostration of business. 'Production is paralyzed,' wrote the correspondent of *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 17, 1948, 'because of the lack of raw materials. The peasant producers refuse to sell their products so long as they cannot buy foods at official prices.' Fear of inflation led to a heavy disinvestment of capital. Such capital, transformed into gold bars or dollars, flowed into Hong Kong, the United States, Latin America. Plant equipment deteriorated. Machines were no longer repaired. Capital ceased to be renewed. Inflation devoured what reserves remained intact in the country. Coal production fell to half the pre-war level; textile production to a

similar level. Throughout Manchuria industrial production in 1948 stood at 10 per cent of its normal level." "Great stocks of foods and cotton accumulated in the villages of Manchuria and northern China, while famine reigned in the cities. At the same time, huge stockpiles of coal accumulated in mining centers, while the peasant population suffered terribly from the bitter cold of winter."⁵

This overall situation—Japanese occupation, the liquidation of industry, the crisis of the Chinese bourgeois economy—would produce a transformation in the character and structure of the government and the bourgeoisie. The further Chiang went from the coast, the more his government transformed itself into a Bonapartist government reflecting the interests of the most reactionary landlords and its effective master, Yankee Imperialism.

Its Bonapartist character developed to such an extent that when it returned to the coast it no longer represented the interests of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie there, but served as the bourgeois intermediary between imperialism and the Chinese economy. Thus a monopolistic concentration of the economy in the hands of bureaucratic capitalism developed to an extent much greater than anything known in the capitalist countries of the West. Concretely, the old Chinese industrial and commercial bourgeoisie was replaced by a new bourgeoisie intimately bound up with the state, which it used to control the commanding positions of the economy. This bureaucratic bourgeoisie, made up of only four families, virtually controlled, in conjunction with the state, the entire Chinese economy: 60 per cent of the metallurgical industry; 53 per cent of the petroleum industry; 55 per cent of the textile industry; 70 per cent of the machine industry; 62 per cent of the electrical industry; 72 per cent of the paper industry; 37 per cent of the cement industry; 89 per cent of the chemical industry.

There existed then a Bonapartist government, the agent of the most reactionary landlords and Yankee Imperialism, which created its own capitalist base in order to free itself from the pressure of the old sectors of the bourgeoisie and to enrich itself through the exercise of power. That is, instead of bourgeois development in the hands of a modern bourgeoisie intent on accomplishing the national democratic tasks, we see a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie intent on guaranteeing the landlords the greatest possible exploitation of the peasants and continuing its promotion of the penetration of Yankee Imperialism.

This general crisis of the Chinese bourgeois regime was more clearly reflected in the situation of the peasantry than in that of any other sector of society. The peasants' situation steadily deteriorated. Toward the end of Chiang's regime it was catastrophic. Let us take a look: "At the same time the system of military requisitions of manpower and agricultural products which drained entire regions was established and extended. In the already cited article by Pei Wan-chung, it is related that in 1946 in the province of Hopei no one would accept a *mou* [slightly over .15 acres] of land as a gift since the special tax exceeded the income which could be gotten from it. Belden cites cases on the plain of Chengtu where the tax on the land exceeded its annual production by 100 per cent. And in the province of Honan, the same writer discovered a case in which the Kuomintang's military requisitions were 1,000 times the tax on the land. Concretely this meant that the peasants not only lost their land, their food and their clothing, they also had to sell their women and sons as concubines or servants to the tax collectors or requisition agents." "Numerous villages were depopulated—the number of farmers who died of starvation during and after the war is estimated at ten to fifteen million . . . Hundreds of millions of peasants found themselves dispossessed . . ." "Thus the war and its immediate aftermath created on one side a new layer of speculators and parasitic owners, and on the other an enormous mass of expropriated peasants."⁶ That is how Germain describes the situation.

This economic decline and the implacable offensive against the workers, as well as against the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, came in conjunction with the weakening of the world imperialist regime: the disappearance of Japanese imperialism, the exhaustion of European imperialism (including the English), and the still greater weakening of Yankee Imperialism as a result of the aid it was obliged to give to European imperialism in order to prop it up and stave off the total collapse of capitalism on that continent. Chiang's relations with imperialism and Stalinism were additional factors. Because of his character as the agent of the most reactionary landlords, it was impossible for him not to make war on the agrarian revolution. For this he counted on the support of Washington and Moscow. But for the same reason, the Yankees were unable to impose their policy of a national-unity coalition government as they had in Europe, since Chiang represented the reactionary landlords who would brook no change in the agrarian regime. At the same time, however, they had to support Chiang who

was also their agent. Nevertheless, they could offer him neither massive aid nor soldiers. Their economic aid went primarily to build up the European bourgeois economy.

In this way, the intolerable situation of the peasantry and of Chinese society in general was transformed into an irresistible revolutionary thrust against a regime rotten to the core and a weakened imperialism. The hour of victory had arrived.

Revolutionaries must give careful consideration to the objective conditions that produced this revolutionary victory. They must also compare them with those which existed in Russia. Russian conditions were as nothing in comparison with those in China. Russia had not been clutched in the years-long grip of deepening peasant poverty, implacable imperialist colonization, or of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie which gorged itself on the national economy—nor was there an unheard-of inflation or such a weakening of imperialism. But, nonetheless, it won a rapid victory and with much greater ease. One fact explains this: in Russia there was a Bolshevik Party, in China there was not.

VI. The Triumph of the Third Chinese Revolution: A Plebeian National War Becomes Transformed into an Agrarian Revolution

From 1935 on, the situation of the mass movement began to change. The Japanese occupation after 1937 would accelerate this change. It extended through the north and along the coast, provoking at once the flight of the Kuomintang and an uprising of the population, primarily of the rural population, against the occupation forces. The form this resistance took was guerrilla warfare. This must be emphasized because there is a tendency to think that the resistance to the occupation was purely and simply the work of the Communist Party. The truth is quite different. The occupation produced a vast movement of popular and peasant resistance outside the control of the Communist Party. This mass reaction can be explained as an effect of the uneven development of the Chinese Revolution: the Second Revolution had left the population of the south, where the process had centered, exhausted, but it had left the north virtually untouched. The revolutionary potential of the northern population was still intact as it was forced to confront the Japanese invader.

Jack Belden, the John Reed of People's China, reported this

movement in great detail. He quotes a former Kuomintang supporter, who had gone over to the movement, as telling him, "... 'I found that the people had already organized several bands of their own and had, with the disappearance of the Kuomintang officials, elected several county governments.'

"In the summer of 1939, there were therefore two governments existing side by side, two district managers, two county heads and two mayors of each city. Lu and Shih did not recognize the elected government of the people and the people did not recognize the government of Lu and Shih."⁷ The patriotic war against the invader gave rise to *de facto* dual power between Chiang and these new organs of plebeian power.

The Communist Party became the leadership of this movement. As Belden emphasizes, "No one seemed to realize that many Chinese supported the Communists because the Communists were supporting the governments which the people themselves had formed during the Japanese war."⁸

Mao accepted the new worldwide Stalinist line of popular fronts with the democratic bourgeoisie and came to an agreement with Chiang, recognizing him as the sole ruler of China. Mao's republic and army became part of Chiang's China. In order not to frighten the bourgeoisie and the landlords, on which the Kuomintang rested, he abandoned agrarian reform. As an old Communist related it to Karol: "Before the Sian incident (preceding the deal with Chiang) a very radical agrarian reform had been enacted in the north of the province which was controlled by our supporters and was beginning to be applied, but after the agreement with the Kuomintang the redistribution of the land stopped." The flag of People's China still bears the four stars which stand for the famous "bloc of four classes" (the national bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the workers, and the peasants). But, contrary to the situation in the twenties, Mao did not subordinate himself organizationally, militarily, or politically to the Kuomintang. Formally, he accepted the Stalinist line, but he continued to retain full independence. On the other hand, this popular front was really an anti-imperialist front against the Japanese invader who, as the Trotskyists had emphasized in opposition to the sectarians, was China's main enemy at that time.

At the war's end, Mao's power in the area of the peasant communes and the zones liberated from the enemy extended over 100,000,000 inhabitants. Stalin, in conjunction with the

Yankees, handed over the cities of Manchuria and the arms there to the Kuomintang's troops. At the same time, they pressured Mao to capitulate to Chiang by accepting a government of national coalition headed by the latter. Mao yielded.

"On October 11, 1945, an accord was concluded between the Kuomintang and the Chinese CP, proposing the convening of a popular consultative conference for the purpose of ironing out all differences. This conference met in Chungking on January 1946, and after twenty-one days of discussion adopted a series of resolutions on the organization of a coalition government, reconstruction of the country, the military questions, the calling of a constituent assembly, etc. There was no question of a radical reform. Finally, on February 23, 1946, under the tutelage of General Marshall, who had come to China as a mediator, the Kuomintang and the Chinese CP concluded an agreement for the unification of their armed forces. The road to 'social peace' seemed open" (General Albert C. Wedemeyer, *United States Relations With China*, pp. 136-40).

The outbreak of the civil war came at Chiang's wish and against the desires of the Communist leaders. Chiang felt himself sufficiently strong to launch an attack on the zones under Mao's control and to abrogate the agreement reached in the Popular Consultative Conference. As Chu Teh said, "If the Kuomintang had put into effect the decisions of the Popular Consultative Conference, there would have been no civil war." Chiang's offensive plunged the Maoist leadership into a sea of doubts. On the one side, the poor and landless peasants were pressing for a solution of the land problem; on the other Chiang was making war on them to recover the liberated zones. The landlords and rich peasants in the liberated zones were the potential or real allies of Chiang. Mao and his group were profoundly reluctant to break their alliance with the national bourgeoisie in their zone. Belden has described these doubts in this way:

"The Communist Party delayed. In the meantime, it called back local cadres and began to collate their experiences, trying to wrest from the welter of details a proper course of action. Autumn 1945 passed. The demands of the peasants grew more urgent. Winter 1946 came and went. Still no decision. Spring came. Time for planting. Time for decision. Still the Communists held back. The delay made everyone feel more keenly the menace of Chiang Kai-shek's armies battering on the threshold of the Border Regions. The Communist Party, hovering on the brink of this historic decision, was like a soldier

waiting to cross the line into enemy territory. One step forward, or one step backward and the thing is over and done with, but it is the waiting that frays tired nerves, starts up uneasy thought and makes one wonder what is on the other side of that line. One longs to go over that line and find out what is there. Just so the Communist Party stood on the borderline between the past and the future—and waited. One step back—peace with the landlords; one step forward—war with feudalism. Truly a terrible decision to make.

“In the summer of 1946, messengers brought down to the county commissars the word: ‘Divide the land.’ The party had cast the die. From now on there could be no retreat.”⁹

The agrarian revolution which had been decreed produced a reaction of the poor peasants against the rich, which led to the constitution of poor-peasant bodies and transformed these into the *de facto* power. “So long as it was only a question of rent or settling with traitors, the upper circle of the peasantry had played a prominent role. But when the land began to be divided and when both the landlords and the tenants lashed out in a fury of violence, the rich peasant began to look with distrust and fear at the spread of the movement, not knowing where it would end.”¹⁰

“Fighting for the land, the peasantry created its own leading bodies—peasant unions and tenant associations. . . . The agrarian reform posed the question of power. In thousands of villages it brought an already existing struggle out into the open. Because of the agrarian reform, the peasants were forced to continually ask themselves: Who will have the power? We or the landlords? . . . The division of the land, in doing away with landlord rule, laid the possibility for elections and thus put village government in the hands of those favorable to the Communist cause.”¹¹

Thus Belden describes the consequences of the agrarian reform. He fails to add, because of lack of information, that the struggle begun by the poor peasants was directed against both the landlords and the rich peasants. Years later the president of People’s China was to make clear the fact that the revolution of the poor peasants was spontaneous and that it had been carried out against the will of the Communist Party:

“In the period between July 1946 and October 1947, in numerous regions of North China, Shantung, and Northeast China, the peasant masses and our rural members in implementing the agrarian reform were unable to follow the directives issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese CP on

May 4, 1946, which demanded that the land and property of the rich peasants remain essentially untouched. They went ahead in accordance with their own ideas and confiscated the land and property of the rich peasants as well as those of the great landholders.

"We had authorized the peasants to requisition the excess land and property of the rich peasants and to confiscate all the property of the large landowners to satisfy in a certain measure the needs of the poor peasants, to make the peasants participate with great revolutionary zeal in the people's liberation war" (speech of Liu Shao-chi on June 14, 1950, to the national congress of the political consultative committee on the agrarian reform law, which was finally adopted on June 28, 1950).

The important point is that the movement of resistance to the Japanese invader by the patriotic peasant communes, as a result of the civil war, became a poor peasants' revolution against the rich peasants for agrarian reform, which the Communist Party could not check and to which it was obliged to accommodate itself. Along with the agrarian reform, there was a resurgence of the peasant associations, and they took power in the villages. This in turn accelerated the civil war. Chiang plunged into a violent offensive against the peasants and the Communist Party which represented them. This was Chiang's final offensive, and it ended in definitive defeat for him and victory for Mao throughout China. Mao's triumph, leaving out of consideration the talents of the Communist generals as strategists, was essentially owed to the fact that his armies were, to a certain extent despite him, the standard-bearers of agrarian revolution. It was the revolutionary mobilization of the poor peasants that wrecked Chiang's army. On October 1, 1949, a new stage opened up in the history of China and of mankind. A new state was born that definitively broke the imperialist equilibrium and gave new impetus to the colonial revolution.

VII. The Class Dynamic: Substitutionism or Socialist Agrarian Revolution?

How should we define the dynamic that carried the Chinese Revolution to victory, and its permanent course toward transforming China into a workers' state? * Isaac Deutscher believed

* It should be emphasized that the entire analysis of the class dynamic of the Third Revolution which follows represents my personal view. — Nahuel Moreno

that what occurred was a typical case of substitutionism. The Communist Party reflected the interests of the workers, although they were not actively involved in it, and was a workers' party. In leading the peasant revolution, it gave it a working-class direction, a direction unconsciously of permanent revolution. Trotsky many years before had discussed this conception of the Stalinists. "In what way can the proletariat realize 'state hegemony' over the peasantry, when the state power is not in its hands? It is absolutely impossible to understand this. The leading role of the isolated Communists and the isolated Communist groups in the peasant war does not decide the question of power. Classes decide and not parties."¹² It is interesting to note that all serious interpretations of the Chinese Revolution accept its uninterrupted, permanent course. The only point at issue is its class dynamic.

In the Trotskyist view, the key to the entire Chinese Revolution and its subsequent socialist course lies in the revolutions of the poor peasants in the north and earlier in the south. Trotsky, in his letters to Preobrazhensky, had noted that "the Chinese Revolution ('the third') will have to begin by attacking the kulaks from its earliest stages." From this fact and from the struggle against imperialism and its agents he concluded that the Chinese Revolution would be much less bourgeois than the Russian, that is, more socialist from its outset.

He thus stressed a profound difference from the Western agrarian revolutions in whose first stage the peasantry as a whole attacked the feudal landowners. Since there were no great feudal landowners in China and the real exploiters of the peasants were the usurers and the rich peasants closely linked to them, the first stage of the agrarian revolution would have an anticapitalist and not an antifeudal character. In making this assessment, he repeated the analysis Lenin had made for Russia. Lenin said in reference to the Bolshevik effort to mobilize the poor peasants against the kulaks: "It was only in the summer and fall of 1918 that our countryside experienced its October Revolution."

It is my judgment, which better documentation might disprove, that there occurred in China a great agrarian socialist revolution in the sense which Lenin gave this definition: The poor peasants along with their organizations seized *de facto* power locally in the countryside in order to move against the rich peasants. This struggle became an essentially socialist struggle.

The Communist Party did not initiate this revolution. On the

contrary, it attempted to contain it, to play the role of arbiter among all the peasant and "democratic" (anti-Kuomintang) strata. The poor peasantry, despite the Communist Party—with which it had its frictions, made its October Revolution before the proletariat in the cities took power. This socialist character of the agrarian revolution existed already in embryo in the agrarian Communist movement led by Mao and Peng prior to 1935.

The great expansion of the agrarian Communist government, its growing influence, is explained by the vanguard character of the class struggle in the Chinese countryside, the struggle of the poor peasants against the rich, which the Maoists were able to impress on the peasant movement of the south before Mao was won over to the ideology of popular-frontism. The soviet socialist program of Maoism at this time was suited to the socialist character of the Chinese agrarian revolution. This was the basis of its formidable expansion and the enormous force it was able to acquire.

It is true that both Trotsky and Lenin always estimated that only the industrial proletariat of the cities could lead this agrarian socialist revolution. On the other hand, the schematists refuse to recognize that this anticapitalist agrarian struggle is defined as socialist by the character of its "historical agency." From the sociological point of view, the poor and landless peasants must be considered petty bourgeois. But, leaving aside the theoretical task of defining the landless or starving peasants with full "sociological" precision, I feel that some indications or intimations demand consideration.

Capitalism arose because it was able to create a gigantic industrial reserve army from the peasantry uprooted from their lands or sunk in extreme poverty on little plots, who had to sell their labor power to live. Marxism defined this social phenomenon and this newly developing class in accordance with its dynamic and not its past. For Marxism, it represented unemployed labor-power and not an impoverished petty bourgeoisie, an industrial reserve army and not a peasantry wandering along the roads or dwelling on the outskirts of the cities. The contradiction exhibited by China and many other backward countries is that the penetration of capitalism has created a giant reserve army of uprooted peasants, which cannot be utilized because of the crisis of capitalism worldwide and nationally and the consequent lack of industrial development. As a result of these historical circumstances, these poverty-

stricken peasants, exploited by the rural capitalists, become a reserve, agents of anticapitalist revolution in their villages, soldiers of the revolutionary armies, Communist militants or future workers of primitive socialist accumulation. They are potential workers who become a vehicle of socialist revolution. Thus a historical leap occurred.

Instead of going through the phases traversed by their brothers in the West—from landless peasants to workers “in themselves” in manufacturing and the factories to workers “for themselves” in the trade unions or workers’ parties—they skipped over the stage of being factory workers “in themselves” to become anti-capitalist revolutionaries locally and nationally. Moreover, this was a class phenomenon since the majority of the Chinese peasantry was poverty-stricken or landless. That is, the Chinese Revolution was essentially a revolution of poor peasants against the rural Chinese bourgeoisie; it was an agrarian revolution which took power on the local level in villages or small zones. The peasant, petty-bourgeois past of these revolutionaries manifested itself in the character of their revolution, which was primitive, barbaric and, most important, lacking in centralized organs of power. The leading bodies of this revolution, the poor peasants’ associations, had no democratic central body; they were merely local.

In its pursuit of victory this revolution became intertwined with the women’s revolution against the authentic survivals of China’s past, paternalism, the struggle in Chiang’s zone against the landlords and against the bureaucratic capitalism which dominated almost all Chinese industry and, ultimately with civil war, against the dictatorial regime of Chiang, the agent of Yankee Imperialism. But in all this revolutionary fabric, the crucial factor was the poor peasant revolution against the rural bourgeoisie.

The actual dynamic of the Chinese Revolution followed the lines predicted by Trotsky: In the countryside the struggle of the poor peasants, the vast majority, against the agrarian capitalists and Chiang became a struggle against imperialism and Chinese capitalism. The Communist Party tried to play an arbiter’s role in this whole combined process but it had to yield to the anticapitalist socialist dynamic that the Third Chinese Revolution of the poor peasants imposed upon it.

From its initial stages as a civil war, the Third Chinese Revolution was a socialist revolution with an uneven development that would mark its entire future. The industrial prole-

tariat played no role in the winning of its victory; the vanguard was the poor peasantry. Since for geographic and demographic reasons no possibility existed in China for the transformation of the poor peasantry into a new class of relatively stable farmers, the struggle of the poor peasantry continually accelerated the course of the revolution, though showing a historical weakness in its inability to create a central leading body. The need for industrial proletarian leadership of the poor peasantry was not operative in achieving the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution, but it is more and more so for solving the economic and political problems of the poor peasantry, the real authors of the Third Chinese Revolution.

VIII. People's China

After the war, a new working-class revival began in the big cities, but it was mercilessly crushed. As a result, it played no role in Chiang's defeat and Mao's triumph. The Chinese People's Republic was proclaimed at the end of 1949 as a consequence of the mass movement's uneven development: the agrarian revolution of the poor peasants in the north, whose organs of power were the poor-peasants' associations, along with the revolution against feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and Yankee Imperialism in the south. The two processes were intimately related but the primary one is that which has been noted. The Mao leadership strove to keep the revolution within the bounds of a democratic revolution. It was unable to achieve this, however, because of the logic of the socialist revolution in the countryside, which produced a state with a workers' and peasants' government. This is a social definition of this regime since, politically, it was typically Bonapartist, a personal regime based on the party and the army.

This Bonapartist dictatorship was revolutionary, however, not counterrevolutionary like the Stalinist one. It was not based on the victory of counterrevolution but on the uneven development of the revolutionary process itself, which gave no time for the emergence of organs of power of the industrial proletariat. In this process only the semiproletarian sectors in the countryside were able to develop organs of power, and these only on the local scale, leaving the regional, provincial, and later the national levels to the army.

The Maoist bureaucracy is a political phenomenon with profound political and social causes: the backwardness of the

landless peasants, petty-bourgeois influences, the weakness of revolutionary Marxism, the decline of the industrial proletariat, and the pressure of Stalinism. It is not, like the Russian bureaucracy, a privileged economic caste raised to power as a reflection of world counterrevolution. As a Bonapartist government, it reflects the contradictions between the various classes and in turn attempts to keep these differences alive so that it can play an arbiter's role. During the resistance against the Japanese occupation forces, it balanced itself on the landowners, the agrarian bourgeoisie, and the poor peasants, and after the start of the civil war it balanced itself between the agrarian bourgeoisie and the poor peasants. This policy of balancing between the poor peasants and the rich failed in the north, where the poor peasants forced through their revolution, but it was successfully applied throughout the rest of China.

Nothing is more demonstrative of this than the Mao group's eagerness to prevent a recurrence in south China of what had transpired in the north. When the agrarian reform was launched in south China in 1950, the leaders issued strict directives to protect the rich peasants and block any action by the poor peasants. "The principal agency for land redistribution was the peasant association and one third of these organizations was to be made up of middle-class peasants, including upper-class peasants." "The law also officially sanctioned the employment of laborers."¹³ The revolutionary process which had been effected by the peasants in the north also developed in the south, but with greater slowness. The regime's mediating role was reinforced by the beginning of the growth and organization of the working class, by the appearance of the privileged sectors typical of a transitional economy — the bureaucracy, and by its attempts to conciliate the democratic bourgeoisie ("The task of the New Democracy we advocate is . . . to assure to broad masses of the Chinese people the possibility of freely developing personal initiative in society, freely developing a private capitalist economy which, however, must not 'hold in its grasp the livelihood of the people' but must bring them benefits, and also secure the protection of all private property legitimately acquired." ¹⁴).

This regime was to be revolutionary because it would unify the nation for the first time and free it from imperialism; basing itself on a mass mobilization, it would halt inflation and thereby regularize the functioning of the economy and eradicate hunger in China. Led on by the logic of the revolution that brought it to power, it began to organize the workers' movement in the cities, enacted a timid agrarian reform in the south, and ex-

propriated the bureaucratic capitalists, thus bringing China to the threshold of transformation into a workers' state. From the beginning the government showed that it was revolutionary as well as Bonapartist by fighting against the corruption, bourgeoisification, and bureaucratization of its cadres.

Shortly after coming to power, it had to confront Yankee Imperialism in Korea. This confrontation forced the regime's policy leftward and compelled it to attack the bourgeois survivals in the country. Then began the great trials of counterrevolutionaries and the confiscation or transformation into mixed companies of the bulk of the capitalist enterprises in China. Thus the most populous country on earth was transformed into a workers' state. While the emergence of a workers' state meant that the regime became a dictatorship of the proletariat, this did not change its Bonapartist character. On the contrary, due to the onset of the stage of primitive socialist accumulation, this was accentuated.

So it was that China became a workers' state with profound bureaucratic deformations but with a revolutionary Bonapartist regime, not a counterrevolutionary Bonapartist regime as in the USSR. The deformation of the Chinese workers' state was the result of the revolution's uneven development, in which the industrial workers' movement had played no role.

After 1953 the stage of primitive socialist accumulation began. The successes registered were truly spectacular: the atom bomb and a steady economic progress greater than any yet known. One fact can illustrate this: in 1958 China passed Great Britain and West Germany to become the world's third-ranking coal producer. China benefited from the existence of the USSR and the other workers' states—not only from the aid they extended, which however great was always of minor importance, but from the example and lessons of the five-year plans.

The successes attained in the first five-year plan began to produce new problems and contradictions for the Chinese Revolution. Most important was the advance and increased social weight of the working class. The number of wagedworkers neared 20 million. "An article in *People's Daily*, August 1957, described a trip of 2,500 miles by a lower-ranking official of the Chinese Federation of Labor Unions accompanied by a member of the Chinese government. They visited ten cities from Peking to Canton. Some of the union members in Canton complained that their union functionaries kept close ties with the administration. In Canton, Changsha, Wuhan, and the other

cities, the labor unions were known as the tongues of the bureaucracy and the tails of the administration and the Department of Workers' Control. It was said that the trade union functionaries never really fought for the workers' interests. Many times they found dreadful working conditions—excessive hours and crushing pressures on the workers—and the labor unions never did anything to alleviate such conditions. Later some trade-union leaders complained that if they did what the workers asked, they got no answer from the government functionaries and were liable to be considered agitators or 'tail-enders.'"¹⁵

The rise of the Chinese workers' movement was given an assist by the workers of Poland, Hungary, and East Germany, and by the Khrushchevist course. In 1956 and 1957 the leadership set a democratic course: the Hundred Flowers campaign. Like any democratic orientation of a bureaucratic and Bonapartist government, however much based on a workers' mobilization, it had an inviolable limit: total democratization of the state, transforming it into a workers' democracy, cannot be achieved by Maoism. In the face of the wave of criticism provoked by this call to democratization (often from the counterrevolutionary right) and the pressure from the workers' movement, which began to organize factory committees, the government retreated; and in 1958 it began its famous "great leap forward" to transform China into a great industrial country like England, and started the "people's communes." These two policies failed completely and their failure was aggravated by three years of natural calamities (droughts, floods, etc.). This forced the government to retreat again.

In the meantime the Maoists' relations with the Soviet bureaucracy were becoming continually more strained until they produced the final break. This serves as yet another proof that these tendencies represent two distinct bureaucracies and regimes, not only with respect to their policies but with respect to their origins and pattern of development. After 1960, this rupture became ever more acute.

The failure of the "great leap forward" and the droughts forced the regime to give higher priority to agriculture and the production of necessities. The Chinese atom bomb is, nonetheless, a demonstration of the enormous potential of economic planning in a workers' state. However, the present confusion of the leadership is shown by the fact that the third five-year plan has been drawn up without a public statement of its goals.

The disaster suffered by the Indonesian Communist Party, brought on by the suicidal policy pursued by its leadership

(with the Maoists' blessing), dangerously isolated China in face of the threat of world imperialism. Precisely because of this defeat, Yankee Imperialism has been able to step up its intervention in Vietnam. Thus Yankee soldiers and airplanes have recently been encroaching on the Chinese frontier.

Primitive socialist accumulation in China, an extraordinarily backward country, has inevitably brought a whole series of mounting contradictions: continuing differentiation of the peasantry into bourgeois and poor peasants (Karol estimates that the average incomes in the countryside range from 160 to 600 yuan from commune to commune, and Chinese functionaries themselves refer to associations of poor-peasants; bureaucratization of state, party, industrial, and military functionaries; growth and reinforcement of the industrial working class; greater weight of the cities as against the countryside. The first two phenomena are negative and harmful to a workers' state. They put it in constant danger since they produce counterrevolutionary strata or sectors.

Such elements can only be defeated on the basis of the political development of the industrial working class in alliance with the poor peasantry. This requires the most extensive workers' democracy. As long as this is not attained, the contradictions engendered by primitive socialist accumulation under a Bonapartist government, however revolutionary, will become ever more grave; for the Bonapartist government is the reflection of these contradictions and the impossibility of their resolution under such a regime.

The cultural revolution is a demonstration of the fact that all these tendencies have produced a crisis, and that the Bonapartist regime, which succeeded in keeping all these contradictions alive and in drawing its sustenance from them, has entered into crisis along with Chinese society. Its definitive crisis is at hand.

IX. Maoism

Maoism can be considered from various angles. One of its most important facets is the enormous contribution made by its political-military-social theory of guerrilla warfare to the program of permanent revolution. "This union attains one of its highest expressions in guerrilla warfare, which—against the armed forces of imperialism and of the bourgeois state—proves itself to be a powerful factor of struggle and a no less powerful factor in political organization.

"Guerrilla formations of this type can live, develop, and win

only when composed of individuals with a very high revolutionary morale, and when connected with the masses of the country. That is to say that they tend to become a selected vanguard that elaborates and applies a policy corresponding to the interests of the masses.

"In addition to its vital political importance, the guerrilla has also proved itself to be an 'economical' form of warfare, needing only limited cadres, a small number of troops, little material equipment, yet that paralyzes considerable enemy forces."¹⁶

Maoism represents, to some extent, a repetition of the case of the Narodniks. The latter contributed to Marxism through their influence on the formation of the Leninist concept of a centralized party of professional revolutionaries. Although Maoism is not Trotskyism, i.e., revolutionary Marxism, it has contributed the programmatic elements noted to the program of the world socialist revolution.

We can also consider Maoism from the standpoint of its method, thought and outstanding characteristics. In this light, it is provincial, backward, empirical, pragmatic, half reformist and half revolutionary, with an ideology at once Jacobin, Stalinist, and Marxist; it practices armed struggle; it is a revolting cult of Mao's personality, which is bound up with a paternalistic outlook.

None of this is Marxism. We must study the growth and dynamic of Maoism in order to be able to understand its contributions, its characteristics, and its crisis. Its development has four clearly delineated stages represented by the following: the ideological imprint of the CP up until 1927; the revolutionary socialist agrarian tendency until 1935; the official leadership of the CP and the government of the liberated areas, which reflected the agrarian national movement of resistance to Japanese imperialism and world Stalinism, up until 1945; the government of People's China which was borne to victory by the revolution of the poor peasants in the north of China. Of these four stages, the first two are prehistory. However, it is from those stages that Maoism's contributions of Marxism stem: the geographical political concept of guerrilla struggle as class struggle in the countryside prior to a seizure of power by the proletariat.

Present-day Maoism is the result of the struggle and victory in the zones liberated from the Japanese occupation. In these zones there arose a plebeian people's state, turned in on itself, with a primitive economy in which the landowners and rich peasants wielded an influence. Though linked to world Stalinism, this

state was totally independent of imperialism. The government of Mao and the CP in this zone was revolutionary and Bonapartist. It was the guarantor of the unity of all classes and their united struggle against the Japanese occupation.

In this stage Mao went over ideologically and organizationally to Stalinism. He accepted the concept of revolution by stages, in which the first stage would be a democratic revolution of all national classes against feudalism and imperialism, and the second socialist phase was left to the distant future. Organizationally, he consolidated a typical Stalinist party without internal democracy and topped by a party oligarchy. This does not mean, however, that the Kremlin controlled it; it remained independent. The lack of imperialist influence and the absence of a substantial regional bourgeoisie gave the Maoist regime and party a thoroughly independent character which complemented its primitive, barbaric, peasant, and Jacobin-populist features. Its centralization and Bonapartism derived not only from its role as arbiter between Stalinism and the masses and among the various agrarian classes, but from the atomization of the peasants.

A product of isolation, of its role as arbiter among classes, subclasses, and regional particularisms, Maoism in turn became a superstructure whose survival depended on such conditions and tended to generate them.

Maoism is a consequence of the retreat and uneven course of the world revolution, which brought about first the isolation of the revolutionary resistance to the Japanese occupation, and then the isolation of the revolution of the poor peasants from the workers of China, Asia, and the capitalist centers. It was a provisional, episodic combination in the course of the world revolution that consolidated itself and formed an apparatus.

This explains Maoism's similarities and dissimilarities with Stalinism and Castroism. For contrary to what many commentators on the Chinese Revolution believe, Mao's justification of Stalin is not a tactical error. Maoism's Stalinist characteristics stem from its development in the Stalinist phase, from the character of the Chinese mass movement during that phase, and from the deep impression left by the recession of the world workers' movement. Its differences from Stalinism derive from its role in leading a process of revolutionary guerrilla warfare first against the Japanese, and later of the poor peasants against Chiang and what he represented.

Its divergences from Castroism result from the fact that Castroism developed in a directly revolutionary stage, untrammelled by counterrevolutionary Stalinism or advancing world

reaction. Hence Castroism's dynamic is less provincial, less nationalistic, and has a less bureaucratic and Bonapartist character. The stages in which these two movements developed explain both their profound, basic dissimilarities and their similarities: both reflect the revolutionary advance of the colonial masses following the method of guerrilla warfare. To sum up: Stalinism is the product of counterrevolutionary pressure on a victorious workers' revolution; Maoism is the product of a provisional combination of counterrevolutionary Stalinism and the uneven development of the Chinese mass movement; Castroism is a direct result of the advance of the world revolution.

The cultural revolution is a desperate attempt to contain the contradictions produced by the course of the world revolution, the counterrevolutionary advance of Yankee Imperialism in Vietnam consequent to the reactionary victory in Indonesia, and by the internal problems resulting from the growing strength of the proletariat and the hopeless crisis of the poor peasantry. I do not know which in this explosive combination of contradictions is the most important. But I do know one thing for certain: These contradictions are the background for the grave political crisis that has been shaking Maoism and China since the beginning of the cultural revolution.

The Maoists' attempt to repeat history is condemned to failure unless extraordinary factors again intervene, such as a new imperialist war against China, which would delay for a time a new upsurge of the Chinese proletariat. When this advance, of which there are symptoms, comes, it will be the disciples, party and method of Chen Tu-hsiu, and not those of Mao, that will come to the historical forefront; for the unevenness in the Chinese Revolution between the development of the peasantry and the working class will have ceased to exist. The tragedy of Maoism is that it set in motion the forces of permanent revolution, of the Chinese and world workers' movement, which will in the end incorporate Maoism as a stage in its development and go beyond it.

X. The War of National Liberation in Vietnam and the Agrarian Revolution

The victory of the Chinese Revolution was followed by an intensification of the struggle in Vietnam. In a certain measure the sequences of the Chinese revolutionary processes were repeated. The people and the peasantry responded to the permanent offensive of the colonial powers by defending themselves with de-

termination and valor, using the same method as the Chinese — guerrilla warfare. There are, however, certain specific characteristics that mark this struggle. Stalinist influence has been much greater on the Indochinese Communist Party than on the Chinese. This is because it has had much closer ties to the West, principally to the French Communist Party. This gave it a much more opportunistic character. On the other hand, the influence of Trotskyism was much stronger and more important in Indochina, and among the Indochinese living in France, than it had been in China.

"The initial phase of the Japanese occupation was marked by important uprisings: October 1940 in Tonkin, November 1940 in Cochinchina, January 1941 in Annam. The Japanese and French imperialists united in fierce repression of these people's movements. It was then that the Viet Minh was set up. It was formed by two nationalist parties, embracing the petty bourgeoisie and the left wing of the liberal bourgeoisie; two communist parties (the Stalinists and the Trotskyists); and by women's, peasants', workers', soldiers' and youth organizations. The program which it formulated in 1941 was a program of democratic freedoms. It did propose agrarian reform, but this meant only confiscation of the property of the Japanese, the French and Indochinese 'fascists,' and the Church. It had the same effect, however, because all the possessors collaborated with the Japanese occupation forces and accommodated themselves to the Pétain government. The second major point of the program was armed struggle against any invader country" (a document by an Indochinese Trotskyist published in 1945).

Japan's defeat produced a popular upsurge and gave rise to people's organizations that took local administration into their hands. The Viet Minh remained the sole central government. It sought to demonstrate its "seriousness" to the French imperialists by dissolving the people's organizations. In Paris, Ho Chi Minh's comrade, Maurice Thorez, was minister of state and tried by every means to keep Indochina inside the French empire as an associated state. Ho Chi Minh's negotiations with the French government failed, despite the fact that the French and Indochinese Communists did not demand independence. This policy drove the majority of the Indochinese workers in France into the ranks of the Trotskyist movement. The Trotskyists alone called for full independence for Indochina.

French imperialism, which also expressed the interests of the other great colonial powers, could not permit the existence of an independent national government like Ho's. It began a gradual military occupation of Indochina, starting from the

south. After November 1946, it stepped up its offensive against the north, which was totally controlled by Ho's forces. Ho strove to maintain his alliance with the shadowy national bourgeoisie, which participated in his government of national unity. This reformist line led him to a dangerous postponement of the launching of agrarian reform. The guerrilla struggle was waged in the name of national unity with the bourgeoisie. Giap conceded that "in 1953, the party and the government decided to carry out an agrarian reform to liberate the productive forces and give more powerful impetus to the resistance." From this moment on, the Vietnamese guerrilla war was changed from a war of national liberation into an agrarian revolution. In the last analysis, this explains the legendary heroism of the Vietnamese fighters.

The talents of the party leaders as strategists, together with the combativity of the peasants and guerrilla fighters, enabled Vietnam to defeat French imperialism at Dienbienphu. The Geneva Accords recognized this victory and divided Vietnam into two parts until 1956, when general elections were to be held to unify the country. In the south, a puppet government was imposed, an agent of imperialism directly dependent on the Yankees.

They ordered their puppet of that particular time not to observe the Geneva Accords in the south, thus assuring total colonization of south Vietnam. The National Liberation Front developed in response to this colonization and began guerrilla warfare against the agent of Yankee Imperialism. The rest is recent history. Faced with the collapse of its agents and the south Vietnamese army, the White House threw the weight of its army and air force into the war to teach the colonial revolution a lesson by example. Before our eyes the most colossal counterrevolutionary war in history is taking place; neither the USSR nor China was ever subjected to anything like it. Despite this, the NLF masses and north Vietnam not only continue to resist but are slowly beginning to turn the tide of the war. And this is being achieved by a small people in a small country! The creation of several Vietnams, as Che Guevara proposed, is both possible and indispensable.

Thus far the USSR and China have refused to join in a political and military united front of total support to north Vietnam and the guerrillas in the south. Only the Castroists, the revolutionary intellectuals of the West, some black leaders, Korea, north Vietnam, and the Fourth International have projected such a united front. The USSR continues unperturbed in its diplomatic strategy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

Its aid to north Vietnam is a tactical expedient within the context of this strategy. The victory of the Vietnamese revolutionaries will not only mean a disaster for imperialism but also for the policies of Moscow and Peking.

Mao's China has rejected a united front under the pretext of its pretended revolutionary policy, which dangerously isolates China from the revolutionary forces of the entire world.

XI. The October Revolution and the Chinese and Indochinese Revolution

On the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, we must evaluate it in comparison with the results of the Chinese Revolution. The first thing that strikes one is that as a result of the Russian Revolution a new revolutionary international, the Third International, sprang into existence along with Communist parties in all, or almost all, countries.

This new organization was to be a vital factor in world politics. Its role ranged from the development and organization of national revolutionary parties—support to the world revolution in Lenin and Trotsky's time—to aid to the counter-revolution or bureaucratic defense of the USSR under Stalin's aegis. This democratic-centralist Bolshevik International embraced the revolutionaries of the entire world. It was as important or more important an achievement than the workers' conquest of state power, although the two phenomena were interconnected. The Russian Bolshevik Party understood the revolution's international character. Therefore, from the very first it gave top priority to a program and organization for revolutionaries throughout the world. Its policy and its organization were subordinated to the goal of world revolution, and, most important, revolution in the central capitalist countries.

The Chinese Revolution, which has meant many successes for the world revolution, such as the struggle of the heroic Vietnamese guerrillas, has not succeeded in achieving, nor has it attempted to achieve, what Lenin and Trotsky achieved: a revolutionary socialist international and national parties. This is because the leaders of the Chinese and Indochinese revolutions, themselves a part of the international socialist revolution, have not understood the dialectic of this revolution. The victories in the colonial world are, in the last analysis, tactical successes of the world revolution. The revolution's strategic objective is no other than victory in the central capitalist countries—most importantly the United States. So long as this is not achieved,

the colonial revolution will always be in danger; there can be no respite for it because the international class struggle will continue to mount in intensity.

The legacy of the Russian Revolution has had a peculiar history. The legitimate and direct heir of its revolutionary socialist program and organization is Trotskyism. But its heirs in the attainment of revolutionary victories of the post-World War II period are narrowly nationalist parties like the Maoists, which propose no program or organization for the international socialist revolution. They have stubbornly refused to accept and advance the real heritage and lesson of the Russian Revolution: its militant internationalism.

This contradiction, as Mao's China shows, cannot long persist, since it is a transitory consequence of the very world situation that is being transformed. Everything indicates that now, fifty years after the Russian Revolution, hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries throughout the world are preparing to accept its heritage, which is the consciousness of the urgent necessity to strengthen the revolutionary Marxist international.

NOTES

1. Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1938, p. 70.

2. These arms were meant for delivery to Chiang. Karol cites Edgar Snow. Cf. note 3.

3. K. S. Karol, *La Chine de Mao: L'autre Communisme*, Laffont, Paris, 1966.

4. Ernest Germain, "The Third Chinese Revolution," *The Fourth International*, Sept.-Oct. 1950.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 74.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

12. Leon Trotsky, *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1932, p. 239.

13. Hughes, T. J. and Luard, D. E. T., *La China Popular y Su Economía*, Mexico and Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961, p. 179.

14. Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1956, Vol. IV, p. 273 (On coalition government).

15. Hughes and Luard, *op. cit.*

16. "Documents of the Fifth World Congress of the Fourth International," *The Fourth International*, No. 1, 1958, p. 24.

7.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND ITS LESSONS

By Hugo González Moscoso

The Cuban Revolution and the workers' state it produced, together with the Russian, Chinese, and similar revolutions, are positive achievements expressing the aspiration of all the colonial and semicolonial masses to free themselves from imperialist exploitation and to raise themselves to a better life.

However, the Cuban Revolution was not a unique or exceptional occurrence but rather the culmination of a process which, aside from specific national features, started from a level common to all the underdeveloped countries. This means other peoples can also follow the Cuban road, adapting its general features to their own national, regional, and local characteristics.

Because Cuba is an example of what the revolutionary masses of a semicolonial country can accomplish with correct leadership, it is necessary and useful to bring out its lessons, experiences, and teachings, so that they may be assimilated by the revolutionary vanguard of the colonial and semicolonial world.

I. The Road to Civilization for the Underdeveloped Countries

The course of uneven development divided the world into advanced industrialized countries and underdeveloped countries. As the former expanded, they came to dominate the latter, converting them into colonies or semicolonies. But from the beginning, the underdeveloped countries struggled to shake off this domination. The idea of liberating themselves was coupled with that of overcoming their backwardness by emulating the development of the advanced countries.

The two world wars and the victory of the Russian, Yugoslav, and Chinese revolutions spread and encouraged uprisings and revolutions of the colonial peoples. Today the tremendous mobilization of the colonial world is continuing in its course, shaking the foundations of the capitalist world and opening

the way for an unlimited development of workers' states. Huge economically and culturally backward masses are demonstrating their desire to enjoy the benefits of modern civilization. In ceaseless struggles, with their ups and downs, they seek not only equal political rights with the developed nations through formal independence, but they also demand equal living standards. National liberation from imperialist domination is bound up with the idea of development, diversification of the economy, and improved living conditions for the masses.

The national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois layers, echoing these profound mass currents, have espoused some demands of this type, which would grant a measure of economic development without disturbing the capitalist economic structures. As was inevitable, in undertaking this, these leaderships came into conflict with the world reality of our epoch.

In order to develop an underdeveloped country, capital and an accumulation fund are required to finance the development projects which it needs precisely because it is a backward, semicolonial country. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois layers do not advocate expropriating without compensation the surplus value extracted by the imperialists and the land rent, and they do not support economic planning under state control to exploit the natural resources.

Unless the structure of an underdeveloped country is transformed, the need for capital must be exclusively or in large measure satisfied through foreign credits. Imperialism then moves back in and imprisons the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships that, impelled by the mobilized masses, initially rose against it. The imperialists grant credits; however, because of their meagerness, because they are assigned to works of a secondary importance, and because of the conditions attached to them and the demands they impose, these credits work against the aspirations of the underdeveloped nations for economic development and industrialization.

This is the history of the Latin-American peoples, who sink deeper and deeper in debt to Yankee imperialism without emerging from their wretched backwardness!

The national bourgeoisies and petty bourgeoisies go around in a political circle. Under pressure from the mobilized masses and seeking to control them, these bourgeoisies head the struggle for national independence and raise the banners of economic development; however, failing to break out of the confines of capitalism, they fall back under imperialist domination, which signifies national oppression and underdevelopment. Under

imperialist rule no underdeveloped country will ever be able to progress and reach the level of the industrialized countries. That is the lesson of history. In the present world situation, the bourgeois leaderships cannot accomplish the tasks of national, economic, and political independence. They cannot promote industrialization, achieve national unity, plan economic development, or carry out a real agrarian reform. That is, they cannot usher in a period of growth in the productive forces that would transform the colonies and semicolonies into advanced capitalist countries and thus repeat the role played by the bourgeoisies of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In the present stage of the death agony and putrefaction of imperialism, the bourgeoisies of the underdeveloped countries are incapable of accomplishing the tasks assigned to their class, which the bourgeoisies in the central capitalist countries accomplished during the period of the rise of capitalism.

As an alternative to this bourgeois dead end, where, instead of liberating themselves and moving forward, the underdeveloped countries strengthen their oppressive chains and increase their backwardness, we revolutionary Marxists and Trotskyists have proposed taking the revolutionary road of expropriating imperialism, liquidating the national exploiters, undertaking a radical agrarian reform, carrying out the postponed bourgeois-democratic tasks and combining them with tasks that are properly socialist, including the establishment of a workers' state.

The big mobilizations of the colonial masses have followed two paths. Under bourgeois leadership they have ended in exhaustion and defeat, with their aspirations for economic development and a better standard of living for the masses left frustrated. Under revolutionary leadership they have been victorious, showing that the road to modern civilization for the underdeveloped countries leads through the destruction of the capitalist and imperialist order to the construction of socialism.

II. Cuba and Bolivia: Two Roads — One Leading to Victory

The Cuban Revolution followed the revolutionary road and for this reason succeeded in establishing the first Latin-American workers' state. We maintain that this was neither foreordained nor a unique and exceptional process — any Latin-American country in the objective conditions prevailing on this continent and in the world can attain a victory like that in Cuba. To appreciate this more fully, nothing is more instructive than to

compare the Cuban and Bolivian processes and to consider the reasons for their different outcomes.

Let us begin by recognizing that both Bolivia and Cuba, prior to their revolutions, were typically semicolonial countries, formally independent but totally dominated by imperialism. As is typical in semicolonies, they were one-product countries—sugar in Cuba and tin in Bolivia—with the sources of wealth in each controlled by imperialist concerns. In both countries the land was in the hands of big landowners, and in Bolivia the survival of serfdom of a feudal type was an aggravating factor.

Commerce, the banks, the means of transport, and the other principal economic activities were controlled by the imperialists. In neither of these countries had there been any economic diversification or development of manufacturing industry. As a result, the national bourgeoisie was weak and parasitic; it depended on the crumbs left it by the imperialist concerns, in the service of whose interests the entire economic and political life of the nation was oriented. The successive governments were imperialist agents not remotely representing the national interests.

The people—the working class, the peasants, the poor middle class—lived in conditions of poverty, backwardness, and humiliation. They were exiles in their own land, discriminated against and without rights in face of the all-powerful oppressor, the gringo imperialist agent.

This identical situation of subservience, poverty, and backwardness was the starting point for the development of both the Bolivian and Cuban revolutions.

In Bolivia, on April 9, 1952, the masses defeated the tin magnates' government of General Ballivián. What was initially projected as a *coup d'état* involving only the military, the police, and the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] became a popular insurrection through the intervention of the industrial proletariat of La Paz and impoverished sections of the middle class. The *coup d'état* was defeated and the uprising was victorious. The POR [Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers Party, the Trotskyist organization] helped to bring about this victory but, because of its organizational weakness, the political power did not fall into its hands but into the hands of the petty-bourgeois MNR. This meant that while the masses triumphed over the army and the oligarchy, they did not themselves take power. A petty-bourgeois party with leftist and anti-imperialist trimmings stole the victory from them.

From the first moment of the Bolivian Revolution, two diametrically opposite political lines were counterposed: the revolutionary Marxist position of the POR and the capitalist position of the MNR. The POR called for an all-out struggle against imperialism, active and organized participation of the masses in the government and in the management of the economy, a real agrarian revolution, and replacement of the petty-bourgeois leadership by a proletarian leadership in order to move toward the creation of a workers' and peasants' government. The MNR, which was in firm control of the government, maintained that the revolution was to be bourgeois-democratic in character and proposed to develop a strong national bourgeoisie in order to build an independent capitalist economy in Bolivia.

In the conflict and confrontation between these two concepts in the first years of the revolution, the MNR found itself forced to make concessions to the masses. In order to maintain itself in power, it had to enact an agrarian reform, nationalize the mines, establish workers' control, etc. But at the same time that the MNR yielded to the pressure of the masses, it vitiated these conquests and emasculated their revolutionary content. The agrarian reform was reduced to a long drawn-out, bureaucratic process of handing out land titles without any attempt to solve the economic and technical problems involved. The payment of heavy compensation upon the nationalization of the mines decapitalized the mining industry; workers' control was narrowly based and was constantly whittled down still further by the bureaucracy.

Commerce, the banks, and the other imperialist or national concerns were not touched.

The revolution was halted after having gone only a short distance. Many of the conquests of the masses were gradually wiped out. The doors of the country were opened to imperialism, and imperialism became the ally of the MNR and its regime.

The army was reorganized and turned over to Yankee military missions; the same with the police. When the MNR was no longer capable of containing the masses with the government of Paz Estenssoro, this army staged a preventive coup on November 4, 1964, and assumed complete control of the government.

The military regime, first under the military junta and later under the Barrientos presidency, carried forward the MNR's unfinished work of dismantling all the conquests of the masses, destroying the unions, cutting wages, attacking nationalized property, and converting the country into a Yankee colony.

Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, the revolution was led to disaster. The economy did not develop, mine production fell by 50 per cent, reaching the brink of collapse; the petroleum industry was reopened to the Yankee monopolies which are now strangling the government-run concern, the YPFB [Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos—Bolivian State Petroleum]; manufacturing became semiparalyzed; agricultural production dropped; unemployment rose; the living standards of the people became more wretched. These were the results of twelve years of MNR rule!

The road followed by the Bolivian Revolution under MNR leadership did not lead to national independence; it did not develop the economy; it did not improve life for the masses. It ended finally in restoring to power the military and the oligarchs who had been defeated in the 1952 insurrection.

The road followed by the Cuban Revolution, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the July 26 Movement, was quite different. If, indeed, the declarations of the revolutionaries in the Sierra Maestra were of a limited character at first, proposing the "humanization" of capitalism and the organization of a national-democratic government, soon, impelled by the needs of the struggle itself and by their contacts with the landless peasants, the revolutionaries found themselves forced to draft an advanced program of agrarian reform. Later, after they came to power, in order to preserve their regime, they responded to the attacks of imperialism and the national exploiters with measures which liquidated the economic, political, and military apparatus of the capitalist regime. In order to confront his enemies, Castro inspired the workers, the peasants, and the people to mobilize repeatedly, based himself on them, and deepened the revolution. The agrarian reform, initiated in the Sierra Maestra, was followed by nationalization of the imperialist and national capitalist enterprises, and then by the urban reform, monetary and educational reforms, economic planning with diversified industrialization, and the raising of the standard of living of the peasant and urban masses. The dissolution of the old army was followed by the armed organization of the people in the militias and the Rebel Army.

This process led irresistibly to the constitution of the Cuban workers' state, the first in Latin America. But to reach this level, the revolutionary leadership went through a process of purging itself. As the revolution deepened and the masses won their rights, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements abandoned its ranks and went over to the imperialist counterrevolutionary

front. The Cuban Revolution was directed against imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. In order to win, Fidel's government based itself on the Cuban masses, the world colonial masses, and the workers' states. In Bolivia, on the contrary, the MNR regime allied itself with imperialism against the masses at home; internationally, it took the side of the imperialist Western world against the camp of socialist revolution.

With seven years difference in time, the Cuban and Bolivian revolutions started from more or less the same level but followed different roads. The main nuclei in the two leaderships also conducted themselves in opposite ways. The Castroist leadership rooted itself first among the peasants and later the worker masses, mobilizing them against imperialism and national capitalism. The MNR leadership moved away from the masses, betrayed them, and allied itself with imperialism and the Bolivian oligarchy.

As a consequence, the Bolivian Revolution led to defeat, crisis, and prostration before imperialism, while the Cuban Revolution led to victory, economic development, a better life for the Cuban people, and national and social liberation.

Thus we see how two revolutions, following two distinct paths, ended with only one victorious, although they both had the same possibilities of succeeding. This outcome was not foreordained, but was the result of the opposing tactical and strategic conceptions of their leaderships.

III. The Lessons to be Learned from the Cuban Victory

This general conclusion, however, is not enough. The lessons of the Cuban Revolution must be more concretely established. We must learn what needs to be done to lead the masses to victory and what errors lead to defeat, as in the Bolivian case, and must be avoided.

In my opinion, the following are the principal lessons that confirm Trotskyist theory:

1) *The revolutionary process is permanent and does not go by stages.*

The first practical theoretical lesson that the Cuban Revolution teaches us is that the revolutionary process in the colonial countries is not divided into stages and does not stop at an intermediate stage.

In an uninterrupted process, the revolution drives out imperialism and liquidates the national capitalist regime. This is the

prerequisite for victory, for political liberation, and for economic development.

The Cuban process did not stop at any intermediate stage but advanced to the point of creating a workers' state. Because of this, it triumphed. In Bolivia, on the other hand, after first advancing, the revolution was contained and, precisely for this reason, degenerated and was defeated—after twelve years of struggles, the military regained power. In Cuba, however, a workers' state developed after only two years. This shows that in order for any backward colonial or semicolonial country to progress and transform itself into a free country on the road toward industrialization, it must combine the struggle against imperialism with the struggle against native capitalism, proceeding from the national bourgeois-democratic tasks to tasks of a socialist order in accord with the interests of the working class. The uninterrupted and combined realization of these tasks assures political victory and opens the road for economic development. In this process, the revolutionary leadership must purge itself, disengage itself from the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois elements that go along with the revolution, and become a revolutionary Marxist team at the head of the working class, the peasantry, and the poor sectors of the middle class.

This process developed clearly in Cuba. The Batista government fell on January 1, 1959, and a new government arose, presided over by Manuel Urrutia, with Miró Cardona as prime minister. On February 16, Cardona left the government and Fidel Castro came in. On July 18, after a crisis, Urrutia and his ministers left and Raúl Castro and Che Guevara took their places. Finally, on April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro proclaimed the socialist character of the revolution. This winnowing out of the revolutionary leadership was the result of the advance of the process and the radical measures adopted.

The new government's first measures sought to improve the living conditions of the people. The law lowering electric power rates was enacted on March 3, 1959; the law cutting rents, on March 6 of the same year. On May 17, the agrarian reform was enacted. The law of December 13, 1959, on recovery of misused property was already a far advanced measure, because it signified the expropriation of the expropriators. In July and August of the following year, the nationalization of the Yankee imperialist enterprises began. Later, foreign trade came under the control of the state, which established a state monopoly of foreign trade. On October 13, 1960, the banks were nationalized, along with 383 industrial and commercial enterprises controlled

by international finance and native capital. On October 14, the very next day, the urban reform law was enacted. Later, internal trade was also nationalized, etc., etc. Thus the economic power of imperialism and the native bourgeoisie was destroyed. Capitalist ownership virtually disappeared in revolutionary Cuba. The persistence of small private ownership represents a secondary factor and makes no difference to the general economic and social situation of the island, although it merits the leadership's attention to promote its gradual disappearance.

These events were inseparably linked. The national-democratic measures went hand in hand with the socialist ones. No matter how one tries, it is difficult to separate the Cuban process into two stages, each with its distinct and specific measures. The schema of a revolution in stages exists only in the reformist and opportunist mentality of the Stalinists and the petty bourgeoisie who seek to put a brake on all revolutionary processes.

The masses of the underdeveloped countries, as we see, refuse to separate their revolution into stages; they are unwilling to restrict their struggle to fighting against the imperialists for national independence; they also want to settle accounts with their national exploiters. The masses are loath to escape imperialist exploitation only to remain subjected to the exploitation of their national bourgeoisies.

In Bolivia, it did not prove possible to remove the MNR leadership and supersede it with a Marxist working-class leadership. The MNR stopped the process midway, at a point where its class interests were satisfied, creating a caste of newly rich persons and disregarding the interests of the nation and the exploited classes. This would have happened in Cuba also if Miró Cardona and Manuel Urrutia had come out on top in the first crisis and held onto their positions in the government.

The leadership of the Bolivian Revolution did not do away with national capitalism; on the contrary, it bolstered it, seeking to develop a strong bourgeoisie. Faced with a mass mobilization outside its control, it appealed for help from yesterday's foe, imperialism. The national capitalists allied themselves with the imperialists against the masses.

Bolivia has been a negative confirmation of the Cuban lesson. Only by permanent, uninterrupted struggle, by driving out imperialism and doing away with native capitalism, is it possible to win and to build a new socialist society.

Both experiences, the positive Cuban one and the negative Bolivian one, in turn confirm the Trotskyist thesis of permanent revolution: that while revolutions in underdeveloped countries

begin on the level of a broad united front, in order to be victorious they must consolidate working-class revolutionary Marxist leaderships and not stop at accomplishing the democratic tasks but carry out the socialist tasks, dealing ever more deadly blows to capitalism.

The Cuban Revolution is a living example of how the Trotskyist theory works in reality.

The Trotskyists strive to bring the working class to power with the support of its natural allies, the peasantry and the poor middle class, and through the construction of workers' and peasants' governments. The Stalinist reformists and revisionists, like the bourgeois tendencies, counterpose to the Trotskyist thesis the theory of revolution by stages: a first stage in which the working class must support its bourgeoisie so that the latter can take power and industrialize the country; a second stage, far in the future, when the workers will aim for power. This theory was applied in Bolivia and proved to be false, because the bourgeoisie once in power did not liberate the country from imperialism or develop it but was satisfied with exploiting the masses as a partner of imperialism. On the other hand, the Trotskyist theory was exemplified in Cuba, leading to a complete victory over imperialism and all the national exploiters, and opening up the way for socialist construction.

2) *The role of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.*

It must be stressed that it follows from the above that the outcome of a revolutionary process depends on its leadership. If the capitalist bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie cannot be dislodged, as was the case in Bolivia, then the revolution is condemned to defeat or at least to paralysis and stagnation, and there is serious danger that the conquests of the masses, including the democratic ones, will be abrogated.

In the present imperialist epoch, these classes are incapable of leading a revolutionary process. In Cuba, after the first successes in the Sierra Maestra, many petty-bourgeois sectors joined. After the victory, when power had been won, more bourgeois elements moved in. But when the agrarian reform was enacted and the nationalizations took place, these elements began to criticize and sabotage the revolution and to fight against it, even taking up arms, as in the case of the Escambray events. These elements quickly recemented their ties with the foreign concerns and the agents of the Batista tyranny. The leaders of the first hour, beginning with Urrutia, Huber Matos, and others, went over to the counterrevolution.

Thus the incapacity of the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie, as a class, to stay with the revolution to its final outcome showed up clearly in practice and not just in theory. If this element is able to maintain itself in power, it blocks the process and diverts it; if it is ousted from the leadership, it goes over to the enemy bag and baggage.

3) *Armed struggle and guerrilla warfare.*

When democratic roads are blocked by a capitalist dictatorship, when the normal methods of struggle run up against an unyielding, repressive government apparatus, when the exercise of the most basic democratic rights leads to loss of jobs, jail, exile, and concentration camps, the people, the masses, and their vanguard, have no other alternative than to take up arms and prepare an insurrection.

The revisionist theories of peaceful roads to socialism developed by Stalinists are not only false and impracticable in underdeveloped countries; they become a useful weapon for the oligarchies and their governments, which use them adroitly to lull the masses to sleep and to combat the "extremism" of the revolutionary vanguard.

In the majority of the colonial and semicolonial countries, particularly those in Latin America, political power is held by military *camarillas* or else by oligarchic minorities elevated to power by fraudulent elections and imposed by military and police pressures. In the majority of these countries democratic freedoms for the masses and their vanguard have been abolished. Parliamentary rule flounders in a hopeless crisis. In practice, the parliaments have no significance, not even as a platform for denunciation; completely housebroken as a result of electoral fraud, they are nothing more than docile instruments of the regime.

In these conditions, which are similar in all the countries of Latin America and in the majority of colonial countries, armed struggle is the only correct way to fight the ruling *camarillas*. Everything else becomes mere charlatanism. Verbal or written protests, which are quite restricted by repression, become a farce. The masses may listen to these remonstrances but they do not find them convincing, because they do not see in them an organized and militant will acting against the regime, but rather an adaptation to the conditions created by the dictators.

Cuba showed that, under these conditions, the appropriate response to liberate the people is to take the road of armed struggle.

Armed action in the form of guerrilla warfare destroyed the best equipped army in Latin America and touched off a gigantic mobilization of the masses.

Broadly speaking, the guerrilla war in Cuba produced the following results:

a) It brought about distintegration in the government and accentuated its crisis.

b) It undermined the morale of the army. An army without confidence and without morale falls like a house of cards, notwithstanding its armament, its airplanes, its artillery, and its napalm bombs.

c) It raised the confidence of the masses and the people in their own strength and stirred their combative spirit. The skepticism and lack of confidence inspired by the traditional parties' verbalistic opposition to the dictatorship and the deals made by the traditional parties with Batista were replaced by a new, radical, fighting spirit. The masses saw the determination and firmness of the fighters and felt themselves drawn to the struggle, to revolutionary action—they felt inspired and their confidence mounted. The inner forces of the masses were unleashed in a mighty, irresistible torrent which in its turn also imparted momentum to the leading group in the Sierra Maestra itself.

In the prevailing conditions in Latin America, the results achieved by the guerrillas in Cuba can be realized in any country. Therefore, I say that guerrilla warfare is incontrovertibly the road revolutionaries must take to liberate their peoples from capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

Armed action and guerrilla struggle have been much criticized. Two criticisms deserve analysis: (a) The exponents of the peaceful road to socialism accuse the guerrillas of being putschist adventurers; (b) they claim that the attempt to create the objective conditions with a few guns and a bold group of men flies in the face of the teachings of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky and is, moreover, an attempted substitution for the action of the masses and the revolutionary party.

The first criticism is tendentious and lacks serious foundation. The partisans of the "peaceful road to socialism" would have to show us where the bourgeoisies and oligarchies have ever handed over power to the masses amicably and without a struggle. This argument merits no further attention.

The Cuban revolutionaries have advocated armed struggle for this period of the collapse of bourgeois democracy, this period of merciless dictatorships, of bureaucratization of the

trade-union leaderships, and of the existence of small traditional Marxist parties—that is, the period of a crisis of revolutionary leadership. Those of us who assert the validity of guerrilla struggle start from the incontrovertible fact that the objective conditions for revolution are already overripe. Capitalism and imperialism are rotten and have long been awaiting their gravedigger.

Guerrilla warfare does not create the objective conditions. They already exist. Guerrilla warfare as a political, social, and military movement starts from the given situation. And it is all the more justified because, while the objective conditions are ripe, the traditional workers' and Marxist parties are unable to mobilize the masses for an insurrectional strike to take power, the classical form of proletarian struggle.

It is not true that guerrilla warfare negates the role of the revolutionary party; on the contrary, it reinforces it. In Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam, the guerrilla struggle was led by Communist parties. In Cuba and Algeria, where the traditional workers' parties proved incapable of breaking out of their passivity, errors, and conservatism, they were supplanted by new groupings which assumed the role of parties.

Guerrilla warfare cannot be viewed in its armed struggle aspect alone, but must be considered as an inseparable part of the overall political struggle of the peoples for their national and social liberation. The guerrillas are the military arm of the people to be used in breaking up the oppressing armed force on which the capitalist regime is based. Thus guerrilla warfare is not a substitute for mass action, nor even for certain other forms of struggle. We might say that guerrilla warfare is a continuation of the class struggle at a special juncture by armed means, which does not exclude other forms of struggle but rather combines with them.

It would be one of the gravest possible errors for the guerrillas to isolate themselves from the urban masses. The armed struggle in the countryside and the mobilization of the cities must be combined to assure victory.

The guerrilla method advocated by the Cubans is applicable to all underdeveloped countries, although its form must vary in accord with the peculiarities of each country. In those countries where there exists a great peasant mass with an unresolved land problem, the guerrillas will draw their strength from the peasantry; the guerrilla struggle will bring this mass into action, solving their agrarian problem arms in hand, as occurred in

Cuba, starting from the Sierra Maestra. But in other countries the proletariat and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie of the cities will provide the guerrilla forces.

In Bolivia, for example, an agrarian reform has already been carried through which, although limited, has solved the basic land problem. However, guerrilla warfare is still the necessary road to defeat the military dictatorship. In our case, the mines, the slums around the cities, as well as certain agricultural zones where the conditions of life are very difficult, will be fertile fields for the development of guerrilla groups. The peasantry of the densely populated regions, whose receipt of land and titles has not altered their underdevelopment and poverty, will also be won to the struggle under the influence of the proletariat. In practice, capitalist agrarian reforms, like the Bolivian one and others which are projected, are too limited to convert the peasants into a conservative force. Only the paid, bureaucratized leadership of the peasant organization is so affected. In Bolivia, the peasants will not be enemies of the guerrillas. In the beginning they will be sympathetic onlookers, later actively revolutionary. The poverty and backwardness in which they live will continue to make them a revolutionary force.

In the last analysis, the Cuban process buried the revisionist Stalinist theories on peaceful roads to socialism and peaceful coexistence.

4) The role of the revolutionary party.

It has been repeatedly and emphatically claimed that the Cuban process disproves some Marxist theses, such as the need for a party. This has gone so far that some say that a party is not needed because the masses can take power without it.

It is true that one of the most notable features of the Cuban Revolution is that it was accomplished without the participation of the so-called workers' parties and even in opposition to their policy. And from this the simplistic conclusion is drawn that the masses can take power without the leadership of a Marxist revolutionary party.

Revolutionary socialist activity in Cuba dates back to the second half of the last century. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Marx's ideas were rather well known on the island. In the first five years of our century, the first workers' parties with a clear Marxist orientation developed. With the degeneration of the Third International and its Stalinist bureaucratization, the

Cuban workers' movement was not left unaffected by the struggle waged by the Communist Left Opposition and later by the Fourth International.

After innumerable fusions and maneuvers, the Communist Party adopted the name, People's Socialist Party, under which it functioned until the Castroist revolution.

Despite this party's long experience and influence, the revolution led by Castro passed it by. What is more, the PSP opposed the guerrilla struggle in the Sierra Maestra, calling Fidel Castro an adventurer and putschist.

This experience holds a lesson of great value. In our epoch we are witnessing a tumultuous advance of the revolution of the colonial and semicolonial peoples. The force of the masses shakes the foundations of capitalist society. The onrushing revolution blocks off the bourgeoisies of the underdeveloped countries and develops its own instruments of struggle in a political and ideological climate strongly influenced by Marxist ideas and by the objective victories of the socialist countries.

In Cuba, under conditions of intolerable dictatorship, the traditional workers' parties were unable to fulfill their function of leading the masses, because of organizational weakness in some cases and in the case of the Stalinist Communist Party, because of an incorrect political position which led it to collaborate with Batista. In these circumstances, a group of radicalized youth, expressing the historical necessities of the moment, created the July 26 Movement; later, in the Sierra Maestra, they organized the Rebel Army with a broad peasant base. These new political formations, in an exceptional way, performed the role of a revolutionary Marxist party, substituting by their actions for the traditional parties which had proved unable to rise to the height of the political tasks of the moment.

There can be no certainty that the Cuban masses would have taken power and begun the socialist revolution without a party. The Rebel Army and the July 26 Movement filled this role. This experience can be repeated in any country where the workers and Communist parties prove unable to take the leadership of the masses by beginning an armed insurrectionary struggle and fall into conservatism and political passivity. It is elementary that if a Marxist party does not play its historical role, new political forces will move into its place. To think otherwise would be to fall into mechanical determinism or Messianism.

In the present conditions of a favorable correlation of forces for the revolution and the extreme weakness of the semicolonial

bourgeoisies, such parties can be substituted for, as occurred in Cuba. The revolution and the masses cannot wait; in certain circumstances they will follow those who, with audacity and valor, strike hardest at their enemies and strive in action to resolve the historical crisis. Moreover, while previously many years were necessary for the formation of a political leadership, in our epoch, convulsed by the tumultuous mobilization of the colonial masses, marked by the progress of the workers' states and a high level of social consciousness, such leaderships can be formed in a short time.

It is true that, at the beginning, the July 26 Movement and later the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra did not have a well-defined theory and fell into confusion and errors. However, their fusion with the landless peasants and with the agricultural workers of the plantations, coupled with the profound mobilization of these layers, later supported by the proletariat of the cities, enabled the leadership of the July 26 Movement to raise themselves to the level of Marxist-Leninist conceptions, following in practice the line of permanent revolution formulated by Leon Trotsky.

By its own experience the Fidelista leadership confirmed the thesis that to solve the problems of the underdeveloped countries, socialist means must be adopted without stopping at the accomplishment of mere bourgeois-democratic tasks.

This is the indubitable merit of the Fidelista leadership of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, made possible by its fusion with the masses in the context of the present situation in the world and in Latin America.

In the socialist construction which followed victory, the leadership of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army proved insufficient, and the necessity reappeared for a mass revolutionary Marxist party. Then the Stalinist party played its hand—from opponent of the revolution it jumped to the opposite position, seeking to seize control of it. The development of the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas—Integrated Revolutionary Organizations], the PURS [Partido Unificado de la Revolución Socialista—United Party of the Socialist Revolution] and finally, of the PCC [Partido Comunista de Cuba—Communist Party of Cuba] reflected the need for a party as well as the conflict between the leadership of the revolution and the Stalinist elements which, assisted by Soviet pressure, strove to put their stamp on this process and promoted the emergence of a conciliationist right wing. The outcome of these frictions, which came

to a head in the Escalante affair,* will have very great import for the future of the Cuban workers' state.

5) *The role of the peasantry in underdeveloped countries.*

The still unresolved agrarian problem in the majority of the underdeveloped countries results in the presence of an enormous peasant mass making up the overwhelming majority of the population and endowed with extraordinary revolutionary potential and explosiveness. Trotsky in "What is the Permanent Revolution? Basic Postulates" [the concluding chapter of *Permanent Revolution*], assigned the peasants an important, exceptional position in the revolution, categorically declaring that the proletariat could win only by allying itself with the peasantry.

The Cuban Revolution has shown that the peasants in an underdeveloped country can play a revolutionary role, and that in fighting to win the land and their liberation from feudal-capitalist exploitation, they can become a mighty stimulus to the working class. The peasantry in underdeveloped countries has close ties with the proletariat. In Cuba, the sugar workers had very close connections with the peasantry. In Bolivia, the workers in the factories and mines have relatives and families in the countryside, and on their vacations they work the land together with them. But when they return to the countryside they bring their proletarian spirit with them.

Peasant rebellion is a characteristic feature of underdeveloped countries in this epoch of capitalist and imperialist disintegration. But the role of the peasantry has its limitations, and it is impossible to speak of a "peasant revolution" or a "peasants' government." In the epoch of the rise of capitalism, the rebellious peasantry did not take power for itself but instead brought the bourgeoisie to power, demonstrating its limited capacity for assuming the leadership of the process. In the present epoch, in which the proletariat is the most dynamic and progressive class, peasant rebellions lead representatives of the working class to power on the basis of a worker-peasant alliance which emerges and is consolidated in the midst of struggle.

The driving force in the victory of the Castro revolution was the peasantry. The Rebel Army brought the agrarian reform on

* This article was written before the trial and conviction of Aníbal Escalante in January and February of 1968. Consequently the reference here is to the denunciation of Escalante by Castro in his celebrated speech of March 26, 1962 (*Fidel Castro Denounces Bureaucracy and Sectarianism*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1962).

the points of its bayonets. However, as this force merged with the workers' movement in the cities and on the sugar plantations, this basically bourgeois-democratic task combined with others of a socialist character. The involvement of the workers blocked the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie in the regime and later gave impetus to the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist tendencies of the revolution.

6) *Geographic determinism.*

Before the Cuban Revolution, every time we revolutionaries raised the question of the struggle for workers' power, we were told that the conditions for this did not exist, that since we live in the geographical domain of Yankee Imperialism we could not maintain ourselves in power for even twenty-four hours. In Cuba, the cowards, the reformists, and the opportunists maintained that their island location was prejudicial to revolution, that it was a disadvantage to be surrounded by the sea since it could serve as a highway for an invasion or a blockade. In the case of Bolivia, it was its landlocked position that constituted the disadvantage, since imperialism could instigate the neighboring countries to intervene or set up a blockade. This deterministic criterion served as the basis of a theory that the underdeveloped countries had to wait for revolution in the imperialist centers as the necessary precondition for making their own revolution. The Latin-American people had to wait for a social revolution to triumph in the United States, then, with the oppressor's grip broken, they could begin their own revolutions.

The triumph of the Cuban Revolution upset this geographical determinism. If Cuba, barely ninety miles from the world's greatest imperialist power, could liberate itself and abolish the regime of capitalist exploitation, the other Latin-American countries can do it also. If Cuba, a country of eight million inhabitants, could overcome economic blockade and defeat military intervention, the other peoples of this continent can do it as well. Whatever its geographic location, any people can liberate itself and maintain its revolutionary government.

The Cuban Revolution has buried the geographic determinism which the pseudorevolutionaries used to bolster their arguments.

7) *Exporting revolution.*

Geographic determinism exists no longer because revolution in any part of the world generates a force both domestically and internationally against which capitalism is impotent.

The Cuban Revolution filled the masses of Latin America and

the world with enthusiasm. Not only did it sweep away the false and opportunist notions of revolution by stages, peaceful roads, and national-democratic fronts with the native bourgeoisies, not only did it isolate those who preached that a socialist revolution could not win, etc., but also, and this is most important, it gave a powerful impetus to the mobilization of the Latin-American masses, it speeded up their political maturation. In every country the slogan, "Struggle the Cuban Way," became the order of the day, meaning armed action and guerrilla warfare, implacable struggle against imperialism and native capitalism, radical agrarian reform, nationalization of the holdings of foreign and national exploiters—in sum, socialist revolution.

Not only were the colonial masses shaken by the Cuban Revolution, but the workers' states as well. For the first time in history a workers' state arose right under the nose of the most powerful imperialist power, and without any part having been played by the Soviet Union or the Communist parties.

The Fidelista leadership had the great sagacity as well as the virtue of basing itself on these international forces. And it was precisely the mobilization of these forces which paralyzed imperialism. The United States has sufficient military means to crush Cuba but does not do so for fear of the mighty international force represented by the masses mobilized in support of Cuba. The United States could easily bomb Cuba but it is stopped short by the effect this would have on the Latin-American masses, who would rise up against it with colossal force. Cuba strikes fear into the United States not because of its military or economic strength but because of the tremendous social power of its example for the masses.

This is what the imperialist bourgeoisies call "exporting revolution"; it is nothing other than the dynamics proper to any revolutionary process and might be termed normal for such processes. The revolution extends itself by the attractive power of its example. The world reality is a single whole, and one country's victories are the victories of all the oppressed, because they have a common enemy in imperialism. Of necessity, the revolutionary leadership is forced to guide this natural process, as Cuba did with the Second Declaration of Havana and the Tricontinental Congress, supporting revolutionary struggles and initiatives in all countries. It is still more necessary to proceed to build a Latin-American mass united front including all Marxist, workers' and popular political tendencies, which would lead a coordinated struggle of our continent for national and social liberation.

The example of the Cuban Revolution is valid for all of Latin

America and must develop into a Soviet Socialist Federation of Latin America.

IV. Defense of the Cuban Revolution

The Cuban Revolution has become the heritage of the revolutionaries and masses of Latin America and the world. Therefore it is the duty of the masses and leaders to defend it. The Tri-continental Congress showed its understanding of this in approving a resolution of support for the Cuban Revolution. However, the important thing is how to make this support effective so that it does not remain a mere declaration of good intentions.

We pose the defense of the Cuban Revolution in two spheres: inside Cuba and outside Cuba.

1) *Inside Cuba.*

The internal dangers to the revolution arise, basically, from the revolution wearing out and dying down, and from the party and the state becoming bureaucratized. These causes affect mass support of the regime, not only at home but also internationally.

Ever since Marx, revolutionaries have understood that once a revolutionary process is set in motion it must advance continually without stopping. The masses constantly require new victories, however small, to maintain their confidence. When the revolution does not advance, it slips backward.

For this reason the masses and their revolutionary leaders must be wary of theories which would check the impetus of the masses from developing, which advocate conciliation and co-existence of the contending forces, which seek to divide the process into stages.

In the initial phase of the Cuban Revolution, the danger of stabilization and conciliation was rather remote. But today, since the fusion of the Stalinists with the revolutionaries of the Sierra Maestra, this danger has become real. The Stalinists are promoting tendencies toward conciliation with imperialism, seeking to restrain the advance of the revolution; and they may go still further in this. Revolutionaries have a duty to warn against this danger and to combat it energetically, as in the Escalante case.

With regard to bureaucratization of the party and the state, which is a clear danger in any revolution and particularly so in underdeveloped countries, these can be averted by involving the masses in all the functions of the new state. Real socialist democracy is the antidote for bureaucratic deformations, both in the

Marxist party which controls the government and in the apparatus of the workers' state.

After the victory of the revolution, the revolutionary leadership has the mission of destroying the old capitalist apparatus and creating a new political organization on its ruins—the workers' state.

It is in this area, that of political organization, that the Cuban Revolution has made the least progress. I do not deny that the Fidelista leadership exercises some kind of check over the danger of bureaucratization, or that this leadership has instituted a kind of "consultative or plebiscitary assembly" where the masses come to be informed, but where they neither deliberate questions nor decide them. In our opinion, this paternalistic democracy is inadequate. In the view of the Trotskyist movement, the fact that Cuba does not yet have the proper political-social organization for a workers' state represents a weakness of the revolution.

The structure of a workers' state was expounded by Lenin in his fundamental work, *State and Revolution*: It is based on bodies democratically created by the masses.

Cuba needs soviets or workers' councils. I am not arguing what form they should take, but fundamentally they must be democratically elected and must serve as instruments by which the masses can intervene, deliberate, and decide on the administrative, economic, and political affairs of the country. It must not be forgotten that the state which replaces the capitalist regime is nothing but the whole of the producer-masses democratically organized.

But without the wide and free play of all the different political tendencies which respect and defend the socialist organization of the country, the political organs of the Cuban workers' state will have neither vitality nor the capacity to develop.

After a period of feeling their way, the Cubans organized a new Communist Party under the leadership of Fidel Castro. The existence of this single party governs all political relationships in the country, and other tendencies are not allowed to operate. This is a very grave error and constitutes a very serious danger, one of the most serious, because it limits the free initiative of the masses, promotes division, and inhibits the enthusiasm of the masses.

In defense of revolutionary Cuba, we Trotskyists propose, on the one hand, the organization of the Cuban government along the lines of workers' councils and, on the other, recognition of a plurality of organized political tendencies, either inside the present Communist Party and with all the guarantees necessary

to their functioning, or within a system admitting a plurality of revolutionary parties.

It is the active masses who, in the confrontation of ideas about the best forms and ways of constructing socialist Cuba, will by their initiative, their determination, and their courage block the conservatization and exhaustion of the revolution and will root out bureaucratization early enough to preserve the health of the revolution.

2) *Outside Cuba.*

We Trotskyists are convinced that only the development of the revolution, breaking through national limits and extending throughout the continent and the world, can insure the total and definitive triumph of socialism.

In part, this concept, which is essentially Trotskyist and opposed to the false theory of "socialism in one country," has been adopted by the Fidelista leadership of the Cuban Revolution. The appeal in the Second Declaration of Havana and the resolutions of the Tricontinental Congress calling on the Latin American masses to take political power are examples of this. But in order to impel the world revolution forward, more than resolutions and declarations are needed; it is vital that the Cuban Revolution continually advance, deepen, and win victory after victory that can serve as an objective spur to the Latin-American masses. Thus there is a dialectical interrelationship in this process. The Cuban Revolution spurs the masses on, and they in turn give impetus to it. The political leaderships must understand this process, make it a conscious thing, and develop it to the maximum, intervening in a resolute manner and planning action on a continental scale.

Thus from the international standpoint, defending Cuba means making the revolution in each and every one of the Latin-American countries, and struggling to drive out imperialism and liquidate capitalism, starting in one's own country. We Bolivian Trotskyists want to do in Bolivia what the Fidelista leadership did in Cuba—construct our Bolivian workers' state, our workers' and peasants' government. The Trotskyists in other countries have the same attitude. We understand that the defeat of capitalism in any one of the Latin American countries will be the best assistance to the Cuban Revolution. It is not speeches, compromises, and cheap adulatory literature that will save Cuba. We Trotskyists oppose the opportunists and charlatans who maintain that the revolution is a good thing for Cuba and support it within the confines of that island, but hold that

it is not a good thing for Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, etc. The Stalinists seek to set up committees to support Cuba in which even the national exploiters are permitted to enter, instead of organizing revolutionary action by the masses, thereby losing the revolution's socialist perspective.

The defense of Cuba internationally demands an energetic attitude of taking the conquests of socialism to the masses. As the decisive step toward the triumph of the world socialist revolution, the influence of the Cuban Revolution must be extended to the workers of the imperialist centers, primarily the United States, to sap the foundations of imperialism and prepare its rapid collapse.

The best defense of socialist Cuba is audacious, resolute, revolutionary struggle.

8. THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THE UNITED STATES

By George Breitman

The Bolsheviks were enabled to conquer and hold power because, among other things, they had a well-grounded view of the national question and knew how to apply it under the specific circumstances of the Russian Revolution. The great value of this asset can be properly estimated when it is remembered that no other party of the prewar social democracy, from the right wing through the center to the left Polish tendency of Rosa Luxemburg, held a correct position in theory or practice on this crucial problem.

The Leninist teachings on the national question have become an integral part of the theory of permanent revolution in the epoch of imperialism and the transition to socialism. Owing to the extremely uneven development of world society since the bourgeois revolutions completed their progressive work, there are very few thoroughly homogeneous states under capitalist rule. Most of them contain oppressed nationalities within their borders or under their domination which yearn to throw off their bondage to an alien power and achieve self-determination as a free and independent people.

The national question, which first exhibited its irrepressible explosive force during World War I and the Russian Revolution, has since become of prime importance in the world revolutionary process. The urge of the colonial and semicolonial countries in the grip of the imperialist powers to assert their claims to independence has been intensified to the maximum by the liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America over the past two decades.

Lenin most clearly and fully recognized the strategical significance of this question for the revolutionary socialist movement and its vanguard, and worked out a program to deal with its manifold aspects along lines previously projected by Marx and Engels. The principal points of Leninist policy in this field may be summarized as follows.

- 1) Every nationality has the democratic right to self-determination.

- 2) Its struggle for this right is just and progressive and must

be wholeheartedly supported against the power and privileges of the dominant nation.

3) The popular nationalist movement has every right to separation from the ruling nation and establishment of independent nationhood if it so chooses.

4) It retains this right even in relation to a workers' state of which it may be a part.

5) In the interests of socialism and democracy, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat are duty-bound to be exceedingly sensitive to the feelings and demands of a hereditarily oppressed people, to accord them every possibility of developing their own capacities in their own way and under their own direction, and to lean over backwards in removing any grounds for the perpetuation or revival of chauvinist or supremacist attitudes against them, so that genuine relations of equality and fraternity between the respective nations can be fostered and achieved.

6) At the same time, the Bolsheviks insisted upon the necessity for workers of different nationalities who must conduct the struggle against a centralized capitalist state to unite voluntarily in a single centralized party.

These teachings on the progressive historical significance of the struggle of oppressed nationalities and the attitude to be taken toward them, which were first validated by the victory of the Russian Revolution, have since spread throughout the world. They have found fresh confirmation in the liberation struggles of the colonial and semicolonial countries that have featured the world revolution since the end of the second world war.

Paradoxically, these national movements have not been confined to the underdeveloped peoples of the Third World. They have also sprung up within the most advanced industrialized states such as Belgium, Canada, and the United States, not to speak of the resistance of the workers' states in Eastern Europe against domination by the Kremlin. The most momentous of these movements in the capitalist lands is the liberation struggle of the more than 22,000,000 Afro-Americans.

Although their movement for self-determination springs from the racism and disabilities they suffer under the white-supremacist monopolist regime in the United States, it has been fed and fostered by the example of the colonial revolutions, which have in turn found inspiration in the October Revolution. It is immediately and consciously connected with the ongoing efforts of the peoples on the African continent to cast off foreign dom-

ination and take charge of their own affairs. In this sense, the struggle of the black masses for emancipation and equality on North American soil today is linked with the revolutions of the oppressed nationalities arising from the October Revolution and the ideas of the Bolsheviks on this question, which have sunk so deeply into the minds of oppressed peoples everywhere over the past half century. We shall indicate later on how these ideas were transmitted to the American revolutionists and applied to the complex problems presented by the black liberation struggle.

* * *

The massive uprisings of Afro-Americans in Newark, Detroit, and scores of other cities during the summer of 1967 have focused world attention upon the black liberation struggle in the United States. What is the nature of this movement, what are its principal problems and its prospects?

Even though most of its leaders and participants do not yet think in such terms, the black revolts should be viewed within the dynamics of the unfolding socialist revolution in the United States. The strivings for equality and freedom by 22,000,000 black people directly oppressed by the foremost capitalist power are more than justified on their own account. But the fact that this part of the population almost all belongs to the working class and is largely located in the core of the country's biggest cities, including its national capital, gives exceptional importance to its increasingly bitter and violent collisions with the American ruling class. As the uprisings certify, black people constitute the most combative and advanced section of the anti-capitalist forces within the heartland of world imperialism.

The vanguard role of the black liberation fighters in the United States is akin to the leading role of the insurgent colonial masses at this point in the progress of the world revolution. Their attacks upon the white capitalist power structure deal staggering blows to U.S. imperialism on its home grounds, just as the resistance of the Cuban, Vietnamese, and other freedom fighters is checking its aggressive designs on the international arena. These interlocking struggles reciprocally strengthen one another as they weaken the chief imperialist adversary. This interconnection is more and more explicitly recognized by the leading spokesmen and among the ranks of both sectors of the anti-imperialist camp.

The black liberation struggle in the United States has a two-sided character. Most liberals and many pseudo-Marxists go astray by failing to understand its duality. As the drive of an

oppressed racial minority bent on self-determination, freedom, and human rights, it is first of all a popular movement with a nationalist and democratic mainspring. But it is much more than that. The Afro-American struggle is not a peasant movement for agrarian reform in a backward country. It is the upheaval of superexploited workers crowded into city slums who are victims of intolerable conditions of life and labor in the richest and most advanced capitalism. They constitute the backbone of the industrial reserve army of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

This combined character of their struggle, which is both national-democratic in its demands and proletarian-socialist in tendency, endows it with doubly explosive force. The black rebels are so many time bombs planted in the vital centers of the capitalist colossus.

The struggle for emancipation has deep historical roots in the colonial slave system of the Americas, the Southern Cotton Kingdom, the Civil War and Reconstruction of the nineteenth century. The last formally emancipated the black chattels but did not give them elementary bourgeois rights on an equal footing with the rest of the American nation. The nationalist feelings and features of their struggle today have antecedents in Marcus Garvey's movement during the nineteen-twenties.

The modern phases of the struggle began with the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregation in the public schools and the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, the former capital of the Confederacy. This was the city-wide mass action that launched the civil-rights movement and propelled Reverend Martin Luther King into the spotlight.

In the thirteen years since then, the struggle has gone through two main stages of development. The first period, from 1954 to 1965, was on an extremely elementary level, corresponding to the inexperience and illusions of the Afro-Americans newly entering upon the path of mass struggle. The movement was centered in the South, the most retarded section of the country, rather than in the metropolitan North and West. The avowed objective was integration into white society with full civil rights, which meant elimination of the more flagrant legal and social abuses inflicted by official racism. Court and legislative challenges, backed up by nonviolent civil disobedience to put pressure on the authorities, were the principal means of action advocated and practiced by its moderate middle-class leadership (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Con-

gress of Racial Equality). Even the student youth from the Southern black campuses who launched the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 and engaged in sit-ins and other forms of direct action were partisans of this method and outlook.

The high points of this phase were the massive August 1963 outpouring at Washington, the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, and the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. It succeeded in focusing national and international attention on the racial conflict in the United States, impelled the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to pay lip service to the complaints of the black population, and forced Congress to pass several civil-rights bills. Neither these measures nor Johnson's trumpeted "war on poverty" removed or alleviated the most burning grievances; they did not end discrimination or police brutality or give jobs, adequate education, housing, and other essentials to the black community. The liberals' policy of reliance upon pressuring capitalist politicians or pleading with them was stigmatized as "tokenism" and condemned by the more militant spokesmen for the race.

The discrediting of this course and the widespread disillusionment with its meager results ushered in the second stage of the struggle. This was announced by the 1964 outburst in Harlem, followed by the explosions in Watts in 1965 and in Newark and Detroit in 1967. This increasingly aggressive phase of the black revolt has far from run its course. It is marked by growing rejection of the goal of assimilation into white capitalist society and its culture and equally vigorous assertion of the right to self-determination of Afro-Americans—a demand formulated in the slogan: Black control of black communities.

Although these black-power trends are nationwide, embracing South, North, and West, they are most pronounced and powerful in the Northern urban ghettos. The leadership comes largely from young people who are not simply militant but revolutionary in temper and outlook. These fiery rebels scoff at pacifist principles and consciously act according to the maxim popularized by Malcolm X: Freedom by any means necessary.

The representative figures of these consecutive stages are Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Dr. King is the American Gandhi, a middle-class leader aspiring to achieve equality for black Americans through the acquisition of civil rights by peaceful, legal, and electoral means. While they are not averse to exerting limited forms of mass pressure, he and his associ-

ates plead tearfully with the powers-that-be to heed the just claims of the black minority and redress their grievances lest they push beyond the framework of the established order.

As a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, King is honored by official white society as well as by many blacks. The Democratic administrations have turned to him at critical moments to restrain aroused black communities, just as he looks to them to relieve the conditions of the restless Afro-Americans. While King retains a measure of popularity and esteem among middle-class elements, his influence has steadily waned as his tactics have failed to deliver the goods. Today he has largely forfeited whatever authority he had over the discontented urban masses.

These ghetto dwellers have instinctively absorbed and acted upon many of the teachings of Malcolm X in the last and most productive year of his life. The key ideas he advanced include black leadership of black people, summarized in the slogan "black power"; self-defense; black pride and solidarity; identification with Africa and the colonial liberation struggles; intransigent opposition to the white capitalist power structure and its twin parties; opposition to all imperialist interventions against colored peoples; collaboration after their own unification with those militant whites who, following the example of John Brown, are ready to do more than talk about fighting racial injustice and social inequality.

The martyred Malcolm is the ideological guide and inspirer of the black radicals. He is the hero of the youthful rebels who are in the forefront of the liberation ranks and spearhead the street actions in the cities and the demonstrations on the campuses. His autobiography and speeches are required reading for young radicals, black and white.

Malcolm was the herald of the black nationalist ferment in the black community. This nationalism is the product of the system of racism, segregation and discrimination which has been an integral part of American capitalist civilization from its birth and which, despite lavish promises, has not been essentially mitigated in recent decades. The growing consciousness among Afro-Americans of their status as a distinctive group with its own interests and objectives has been intensified by the independence struggles in Africa and the colonial revolution and sharpened by the glaring and growing contrast between their own conditions and those of white Americans. The ghettos serve to unite them physically, economically, psychologically, and culturally.

At the present point, black nationalism is more of a mood than an organized force. It is highly diversified in its manifestations, which range all the way from advocacy of a separate nation to searches for the special values of "negritude," from proponents of black business ownership to revolutionary disciples of the Malcolm X school and black Marxists.

There are quite a few "Marxists" in the United States and other countries who misjudge the nature of the nationalist sentiments among Afro-Americans and fail to grasp their highly progressive character and revolutionary thrust. The aspiration of 22,000,000 blacks to decide their own destiny is in itself just and democratic. But there is more to the matter than that.

Its assertion in practice keeps bringing them into headlong conflict with U. S. capitalist society and its state apparatus, which will not and cannot satisfy their economic, social, legal, political, and cultural demands. The irrepressible opposition of the insurgent black masses has objectively become the most upsetting and radicalizing factor in American life. This is recognized by the politicians and press when they speak of "the racial issue" as the most important and urgent in the United States today.

The other side of the dual nature of the freedom movement makes it all the more menacing to the capitalist regime. This rebellious social force, striving for equality and human rights, is at the same time an indispensable part of the working class reacting against excessive exploitation. Its black nationalism is indissolubly fused with its proletarian situation, no matter how little or how much this or that individual realizes the fact. Afro-American resistance and rebelliousness willy-nilly becomes the most violent and matured expression of anticapitalist opposition within the United States.

Black nationalism is often confused with separatism, though the two are not identical. Separatism is only one facet, one trend, and as yet a minor one, in the broad and agitated stream of Afro-American nationalism. It is an ultimate option which has yet to be adopted by the black masses. Whether or not they will ever choose to exercise their right to territorial division and autonomy depends upon the further development of American history.

At the present juncture most politically conscious radical black nationalists call for "black power," interpreted as control over their own communities. Some go further. The Conference on Black Power, held at Newark immediately after the uprising there, enthusiastically adopted a resolution proposing the ini-

tiation of "a national dialogue on the desirability of partitioning the United States into two separate and independent nations, one to be a homeland for white Americans and the other to be a homeland for black Americans." As the mood of the ghetto dwellers hardens and hopes for solving their problems under the existing system dwindle, they can raise more determined cries for separatism than this mild proposal for discussion.

The ghetto uprisings, which have extended from Birmingham, the principal industrial center of the South, in 1963 to scores of cities from coast to coast in 1967, must be considered as the most aggressive manifestations of black nationalism to date. These revolts are rehearsals for further encounters that will be better prepared, on a larger scale, and not so quickly suppressed. The basic causes of the upheavals are racial segregation and injustice; rent-gouging; price extortion; substandard housing in dirty slums; inferior and racist education; bad or non-existent health and recreational facilities; lack of job opportunities and widespread unemployment, especially among the youth; and a general alienation from a society whose ideology and culture are openly or subtly racist (which explains the beginnings of radicalization even among middle-class people, intellectuals and students who can escape the slums). In almost every instance they were touched off by acts of police harassment. The anger and frustration produced by these conditions have been inflamed by the Vietnam war, which has caused the slashing of antipoverty and welfare appropriations by the White House and Congress and the drafting of disproportionate numbers of Afro-Americans for military service.

Despite the frantic and fruitless hunt for culprits and scapegoats on the part of the authorities and witch-hunters, these actions were not planned or directed by any organization. They were spontaneously provoked by the unrestrainable rage against their misery and mistreatment seething throughout all black communities. Their anger was vented in the first place against their most obvious oppressors, the agents of "law and order," and the merchants who fleece them in their neighborhoods.

These counterattacks against the racist system and its armed defenders demonstrated a high degree of unity and solidarity in the black community. The ghetto dwellers were elated at the opportunity to strike back at their enemies and exploiters and retaliate for the countless indignities heaped upon them. One of the most noteworthy features of the actions was the leading role of the young people. Unlike their more conserva-

tive elders, these new-breed rebels have been brought up in the atmosphere of the colonial revolution, the resurgence of Africa, the awakening of the black masses and the freedom movement that has been advancing since 1954. They are imbued with a revolutionary ardor which makes them willing to sacrifice their lives in the cause of black liberation.

These street mobilizations, which assumed forms of armed warfare in numerous places, testify to the revolutionary propulsion behind the movement which has only begun to display its creative power.

Despite its vast promise, the movement at its present stage is subjected to heavy handicaps which hold back its progress. Its activities are spasmodic, unc centralized, and localized. They need to be unified, better coordinated, and more consciously and systematically directed on a national scale. Unfortunately, the movement does not yet have any authoritative leadership with a program capable of welding militant cadres together and helping them organize the masses.

The main defect of the liberation forces is the absence of an independent black political party, no matter what its name, which could mobilize and lead the people against the two capitalist parties, both on the electoral field and in mass actions against the evils of the system they uphold and administer. Ninety-five per cent of the black voters cast their ballots for Johnson in 1964, and the two black mayors first elected in the big American cities in 1967 ran as Democrats.

Most of the moderate leaders seek to keep the black people shackled to the Democratic or Republican machines. But even the most defiant black-power spokesmen have yet to grasp or state the necessity for breaking completely and conclusively with capitalist politics and moving ahead to genuinely independent, all-black political organization and action. Many of them try to evade the crucial problems posed by politics on the grounds that electoral efforts are worthless or harmful diversions from more effective forms of direct action.

These apolitical opponents of an independent black party do not yet understand the great benefits such an enterprise can bring in arousing, enlightening, educating, organizing and uniting the Afro-American masses and providing a vehicle for the idealism of militant black youth. It is, indeed, the best available way to realize the popular slogan of black power they champion.

They hesitate to advocate this proposal because, among other reasons, they envisage a new black political organization as

a duplicate of the existing vote-catching machines that they rightly despise and reject. They do not see that such a party can be—and under pressure from its constituents would have to become—the leader and organizer of mass actions as well as an electoral apparatus. It would not only seek to elect its own candidates to office but could participate in every area of struggle that affected the welfare of black people: rent strikes, boycotts, fights for jobs and control of schools, against police brutality and military interventions against their colonial brothers. It could inscribe on its banner Malcolm X's motto: "freedom by any means necessary."

The establishment of such a party would not only add a powerful arm to the Afro-American struggle, enabling its members to speak in a single voice and make alliances on an equal basis with other oppositional forces. It could shake and break up the two-party system that has long ensured the stability of monopolist domination in the United States. Such a shattering of the established political structure would immensely accelerate the regrouping of class forces on American soil.

In the first flush of their drive toward self-determination, carried away by the surge of the urban uprisings and in justifiable revulsion against the institutions and practices of the white-supremacist system, some of the finest militants shy away from any type of political organization. They believe that it is totally incompatible with direct mass action. They hastily and uncritically transfer tactics and techniques which have proved applicable in the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese liberation struggles to the far more complex circumstances of combating and defeating the ruling class in the stronghold of world capitalism. They categorically counterpose armed struggle, and more narrowly guerrilla warfare, in the cities to mass political organization as the sole indicated and effective mode of revolutionary action.

They also proceed on the mistaken assumption that electoral and parliamentary action is outmoded or has been bypassed and believe that armed struggle alone is on the agenda. They overlook the meaning of the fact that in 1967, after the uprisings, black voters turned out in great numbers to nominate and elect black mayors in Gary and Cleveland, even on Democratic tickets. In certain electoral districts the black candidates received all the votes. Moreover, they offer the black communities no alternative to the Democratic or Republican candidates in the 1968 presidential campaign.

In their exclusive preoccupation with armed struggle and

associated forms of direct action, however legitimate that may be, the ultraleft militants fail to come to grips with the most pressing problem of the present hour in the struggle for emancipation. That is the barely begun task of organizing, unifying into a cohesive force, and educating the millions of blacks who must shoulder the colossal assignment of overturning white supremacy and radically transforming capitalist America. This prolonged and difficult job cannot be impatiently waved aside or skipped over by those who aspire to lead the black revolution.

The most agonizing contradiction in the present situation is the readiness of the black masses for the most vigorous actions against their oppression by the racist capitalist system and the inertia and apathy of the white workers. The deep prejudices among the white workers and the alienation between them and the black communities is the baneful heritage of four centuries of white supremacy and racism; of a consistent policy of dissension and disunity between black and white, inculcated and enforced by the possessors of power, property, and propaganda; of a corrupt and conservatized union bureaucracy which shamefully discriminates against black workers; and of the materially privileged position and general political and ideological backwardness of the more favored elements of the working class.

These adverse circumstances compel the black resistance fighters to combat the plutocracy single-handed without support, and even with a certain measure of hostility, from the main body of the working class. Common action between the black masses and the white workers is indispensable for any successful long-term effort to abolish American capitalism. But that requires prior organization of the black masses on the one hand and a resurgence of labor militancy on the other. Neither of these prerequisites for cooperation against their joint exploiters has yet come into existence.

This is not surprising or unprecedented. The various forces called upon to make a social revolution rarely move onto the field of battle all at once, or at an even rate. In the United States today the blacks are far out in front while the white workers lag very far in the rear. This irregular development of the anticapitalist struggle creates excruciating problems for both black and white revolutionists.

Their difficulties are great. But they are more than matched by the perplexing problems facing the monopolist rulers of the United States in dealing with the black liberation movement. For a decade the deluded decision-makers at Washington

thought they could dispose of the demands of black people by big promises and small concessions. This has not worked and the moderate leaders they counted on to hold the insurgency in check have been used up. The revolts in the cities multiply, grow in intensity and ferocity, and become ever harder to bring under control. What are the rulers of America to do in so serious a social crisis?

Although their previous policy is manifestly bankrupt, they have still to elaborate and adopt a different line of policy to handle the new situation. They have not shrunk from using police, state troops, and federal paratroopers to put down the uprisings with savage vindictiveness. At the same time neither Congress nor the President is able or willing to take the steps required to wipe out the injustices that provoked the uprisings.

The high and mighty possessors of power are obviously uncertain how to proceed. They are caught in a tortuous dilemma. They need social peace and stability at home to pursue their imperialist adventures abroad unimpeded and to present an attractive image to the rest of "the free world." Yet they have been no more successful in pacifying the Afro-Americans than they have in breaking the will of the Vietnamese to be free.

They can either continue the course of conciliation and concessions interspersed with punitive measures, which has proved ineffective over the past decade, or embark upon outright repression. Neither alternative is satisfactory or workable. If the richest capitalist country on earth could not remove or even alleviate the grievances of 22,000,000 Afro-Americans during six years of the biggest boom in its history, can it muster the means to do so under less propitious economic circumstances in the years ahead?

There remain the "extreme solutions" of apartheid on the South African model or genocide. Many Afro-Americans anticipate and dread this eventuality, which spurs them to fight all the more uncompromisingly for their rights and lives. The imperialists who dropped atom bombs on Japan, and napalm and antipersonnel bombs on women and children in Vietnam, are fully capable of the worst atrocities. But for the time being they are restrained from resorting to the most extreme measures by powerful considerations of international diplomacy and public opinion and by fear of dangerous domestic consequences.

It would be risky and costly to try and crush the determined resistance to such a Hitlerite course that is bound to be put up by the millions of blacks concentrated in the major population centers of the country. Such a cruel and bloody racial

and civil war would entail the abolition of democracy and the attempted clamping of some form of military dictatorship on the whole American nation. A counterrevolutionary move along such lines would arouse resistance from other sections of the people and have incalculable consequences.

No matter from what angle it is approached, the confrontation between the black insurgents and the white-supremacist capitalist regime is fraught with immense revolutionary perspectives.

In an article published in *Pravda* on the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, President Ho Chi Minh stated that "complete victory can be won by the national liberation revolution only when it develops into socialist revolution." This theorem of the permanent revolution applies with full force to the black liberation struggle in the United States because of the proletarian composition of the black population, their economic role under monopoly capitalism, and the impact of the lessons absorbed from the colonial revolutions.

Up to now the movement has unfolded along nationalist-democratic lines. But, like the Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese, and similar revolutions, it has an inherent and irresistible tendency to break through the narrow confines of pure and simple nationalism and acquire a more and more pronounced anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist cutting edge. The fundamental problems of jobs, housing, education, and foreign policy confronting the movement are social, economic, and political in character and require a transformation of class relations for their solution.

This logic of revolutionary and progressive nationalism in the imperialist era has already manifested itself in the black liberation movement. Its most advanced leaders and conscious fighters have begun to embrace the internationalist spirit and class-struggle concepts of Marxian socialism. Malcolm X was the great pioneer who initiated a process of evolution from black nationalism toward socialism and internationalism. His ideas have been taken up since his death and carried forward by certain SNCC and CORE leaders, among others. The speeches of Stokely Carmichael at the OLAS Conference at Havana and his subsequent tour of the capitals of the Third World betoken a rapprochement between the adherents of the most combative black nationalism and the positions of revolutionary socialism. This alignment is bound to become closer as the struggle against "Uncle Sham" intensifies on all fronts.

The Socialist Workers Party was the first radical tendency in

the United States to recognize the full import of the black liberation movement and the revolutionary implications of black nationalism. It has been among their sturdiest and most consistent, though not uncritical, supporters at all stages of their development. This was acknowledged by Malcolm X and evidenced in his friendly attitude toward the Socialist Workers Party, which has been most instrumental in popularizing his views. The Socialist Workers Party seeks to reinforce collaboration on all levels between black militants and revolutionary socialists in order to further the aims of the black liberation struggle and prepare the vanguards of both the black masses and white workers for united action, in combat to the end, against the racist profiteers.

The Socialist Workers Party has derived its understanding and orientation on this key problem of the American revolution from the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky. In the ideologically primitive period before World War I and the Russian Revolution, even those American socialists who had shaken off racial prejudice did not recognize the special place and great importance of the doubly exploited black people in the revolutionary process. They submerged the distinctive claims of the blacks in a single undifferentiated struggle of the working class as a whole against the capitalist system.

The thinking of the pioneer American Communists on this matter was profoundly transformed when they learned about the Leninist ideas on the revolutionary-democratic dynamism of the national question and the Bolshevik strategy for liberation of the oppressed nationalities. Their understanding was enhanced as they later assimilated the theory of the permanent revolution.

During his last exile, from 1929 to 1940, Trotsky, the creator of that theory, transmitted to his American followers a deeper understanding of the progressive nature of the black struggle for self-determination. His program called for its unconditional support from all genuine revolutionists. He perspicaciously forecast that black Americans, as the most dynamic segment of the working class and the most capable of revolutionary courage and sacrifice, were destined to become its vanguard.

This method of approach has guided the subsequent major resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party which have analyzed the dominant features of the successive stages of the struggle from 1939 to 1967. The publications containing their conclusions have had a broad circulation and considerable influence upon black and white radicals over the past decade.

The 1967 uprisings were a milestone in the black liberation struggle. They unmistakably marked its transition from reformism to revolutionism, from petitioning, praying and relying upon the promises of glib capitalist politicians to the most aggressive and advanced forms of direct action. There will be no turning back along this road.

The black liberation struggle in America has likewise become a component part of the world revolution and is bound to become an ever more powerful factor in its development because of its presence in the entrails of the imperialist monster. It acts as a mighty and unmanageable force, upsetting the equilibrium of monopoly capitalism, challenging its domination at home, and setting examples which can prod other oppositional elements of American society into action.

What are its prospects of victory? Liberals and skeptics of all varieties insistently point out that the minority status of the Afro-Americans, who compose only one-ninth of the population, dooms to defeat any far-reaching revolutionary objectives. The odds against them are overwhelming, they say.

These fainthearts overlook a number of considerations. First of all, the 22,000,000 blacks are a unique minority. They comprise the largest, most compact and influential sector of the urban population. They are already more than half the residents of the national capital and by 1970 ten of the biggest Northern cities are expected to have black majorities. They are not only rooted in the heart of the metropolitan centers but also in the basic industries, transportation, and the service trades.

In the second place, they have powerful allies abroad in the colonial lands, the workers' states, and among progressive-minded people the world over, who sympathize with their strivings for equality and emancipation. They also have domestic supporters among the rebel youth. Finally, their isolation on the home front can be overcome once a sizable segment of white workers shakes off its lethargy and moves in an anti-capitalist direction.

The Afro-American resisters have embarked upon the most formidable revolutionary undertaking of our time: a mortal contest with the world's strongest capitalist regime in its own citadel. That victory will not come easily or immediately. A costly, bloody, and prolonged conflict, which will hold many surprising twists and turns, looms ahead. The American Marxists are committed to do all in their power to aid and speed that victory as an inseparable part of the socialist revolution in their country.

9. IS THERE A THIRD WAY FOR THE THIRD WORLD?

By Sitaram B. Kolpe

Dr. P. C. Joshi, a leading economist of New Delhi, known for his "pro-left" views, has posed the question: "Has the Middle Path Failed?" In a special article contributed to the *Weekly Link* (May 21, 1967), he says: "There is a view, shared among others by some prominent economists, that Indian economic planning had accepted the framework of a mixed economy and non-classical middle path of development. The fact is that at the time of independence the concept of a middle path appeared to offer possibilities of a broad-based economic and social development. It appeared to be most suited also to a political framework based on adult franchise, equality of opportunity and the right of political organization to propertied as well as non-propertied classes. In other words, it appeared to be the best way of providing a wide base to the development process as required by political democracy and the imperatives of equity."

Twenty years of political independence, i.e., of capitalist development in India, albeit "within a framework based on adult franchise," have left Dr. Joshi and his cothinkers, among them the leading theoreticians of the Communist Party of India, utterly frustrated. Says Dr. Joshi: "There is no gainsaying the fact that the past twenty years have witnessed a gradual drift from its basic spirit, and the most significant cause of this drift has been the pressure by vested interests. [?] The result was that those aspects of the programme of the middle path registered greater success which were in the interest of the organised sections of the private sector. In contrast, aspects which would have prevented them from acquiring commanding positions in the economy achieved only meagre success." [!]

Dr. Joshi is an economist who rightly refuses to call himself a Marxist. He is fascinated by the "basic spirit" of the "middle path" or the "third way"—initiated by his "middle-of-the-road political forces headed by Nehru" for the "third world." A "middle path" between the classical capitalist path

of development, as in Western Europe and North America, and the socialist path shown by the Soviet Union and other workers' states. But the "middle path" of Nehru, Dr. Joshi himself grudgingly admits, has led to the enrichment of the "organised sections of the private sector," i.e., of the capitalist class. He does not explain how the "middle path" pursued by India is different from the capitalist path.

The report of the Congress Party's Agrarian Reforms Committee, adopted in 1948, says Dr. Joshi, "had tried to make the middle path the basis of its recommendations" in the rural sector. One of its recommendations was that "owner-cultivation, reinforced by cooperative institutions, should be the basic framework for agricultural growth" in India. "Owner-cultivation," i.e., private peasant proprietorship in place of the old feudal *zamindari*, was sought to be promoted in two alternative ways — "by converting the actual tillers into owner-cultivators, and by converting rentier landlords into self-cultivating owners."

That was the basic approach underlying the land reforms initiated by the bourgeois rulers under the leadership of Nehru's Congress Party. The broad strategy was that of "reorganizing" the former feudal land-tenure system to suit the needs of the capitalist class by integrating the vast rural sector with the "expanding" capitalist market.

In reality the Congress rulers did not go to the extent of enforcing "either of the two extremes," according to Dr. Joshi. They are supposed to have followed a "middle course" here also! The Congress government codified "limited right of resumption of self-cultivation" to rentier landlords, and also accepted the theory of "limited opportunity" for tenants to become owner-cultivators.

How did this "middle path" work out in the rural sector since 1948? According to 1961 census data on "interest groups in land," the predominant section of the cultivators in the country as a whole has been classified under "owner-operation" and the predominant section of cultivators has been grouped as "owner-operators." The government's "Research Program Committee" survey has shown that "this increase in owner-cultivation has occurred more as a result of landlords becoming owner-operators than by the tenants becoming owners of land . . . as a consequence of the wave of evictions of tenants following tenancy reforms." That was the big price the tenants and sharecroppers, a large section of the rural poor, had to pay for the "bourgeoisification" of agriculture. The so-called middle path has not contributed to raising food production, and re-

cent famine conditions prevailing in different states have shown that far from rationalizing agriculture, it has introduced into it an element of permanent crisis.

Dr. Joshi, the new protagonist of the middle path, has made the following confession. "The rural poor did not get their dues only from land reforms but also from the community development and other [official rural development] programmes. These schemes had been launched primarily to provide institutional and resource support to the weaker sections but they came to be dominated by the stronger rather than by the weaker sections of the rural society . . . they have hardly made any impact on the landless classes . . . what we have in the rural sector today is not a mixed economy, based on the principle of the middle path, but an economy dominated by capitalist forces and developing on capitalist lines."

What is true of the trend in the rural economy is true of the trend in the economy as a whole. But Dr. Joshi is not prepared to accept defeat as yet. "Well," says he, "the capitalist forces have exploited the middle path to their advantage, and appropriated a large share of the benefits accruing from the public sector institutions and resources." But then these, according to him, are mere "distortions of the middle path by the vested interests in their favour" and not its "natural outcome"! Nor is he prepared to recognize this process as a necessary development of capitalism in the "under-developed countries"! We quote his views rather extensively because, as a "fellow-traveler," he reflects the current thinking of the "official" Communist Party in India. He is more lucid and more logical than the official theoreticians of the CPI.

There are revolutionary Marxists in India who maintain that the so-called third path is nothing but a capitalist path of development. Dr. Joshi, however, takes to task those Marxists and others "who believe that this [capitalist] course of development was inherent in the middle path, and that it was the logical outcome of the policies adopted by the ruling party in the name of the middle path." Says he: "This is an oversimplified if not a fatalistic view. When the middle-of-the-road political forces headed by Nehru showed their political sagacity and the insight into the socio-political requirements of testing the adequate implementation in order to avoid dangers of its distortion by the vested interests, to imagine that the objective of the middle path as conceived by the leadership could be realised through the administrative apparatus inherited from the past was highly utopian. The need of a committed political

force, social mobilisation and above all effective representation of the weaker section of the society in the power structure—all these preconditions were soft-pedalled by the leadership."

Here is an economist of the neo-Stalinist school in his true colors. He is a social democrat in reality. He talks of neutralizing the "pressure tactics" of the "vested interests," i.e., the bourgeois state, through what he terms "social mobilisation and effective representation of the weaker section of the society in the power structure"! He does not believe in the need for bringing about a revolutionary transformation in the existing capitalist property relations or for overthrowing the bourgeois state apparatus. He blames the bourgeois administrative machinery, the bureaucratic apparatus of the British imperialists inherited by the bourgeois Congress rulers, for the debacle of the so-called middle path in India.

Dr. Joshi complains about the lack of "public spirited personnel and labour commitment along with bureaucratic methods of management" for the failure of the "public enterprises becoming a model labour enthusiasm method and business efficiency." Dr. Joshi equates public-sector enterprise within a capitalist framework with social ownership. In fact this is the basic error of the Stalinist theorists. They have invented a "third world," which is supposed to be pursuing a "non-capitalist path of development"—a third world of bourgeois regimes in the newly independent countries which are experimenting with seemingly anticapitalist measures! It has been amply demonstrated during the last twenty years in India, however, that the development of a public sector, built with large public funds, is an important strategy employed by the bourgeoisie to broaden its economic base and sustain it under difficult conditions.

Dr. Joshi, however, is still not convinced. He goes a step further. According to him, the blame for such a development in India "which favoured the vested interests," i.e., capitalism, had to be "shared also by the left forces," meaning supporters of the CPI, inasmuch as "they functioned mostly critically rather than as self-conscious participants." He says: "The Leftists consider the middle path only as a 20th century version of classical capitalism, conspiracy of the vested interests. They do not see in it an opportunity for direction and for activating the vast social forces."

Dr. Joshi's criticism is that leaders of the CPI did not go far enough in identifying themselves with the "middle path." He says: "Even when they supported some aspects of the middle

path in Parliament and Legislatures, they seldom took an initiative in organising a non-capitalist sector of the economy, in countering the pressure of organising interested groups and thereby strengthening the political balance in favour of the weaker sections. In the absence of any vigorous initiative from the left it is not surprising that only the dark foreboding of the left colour grew and the brighter possibilities of the middle path remained unexploited and unrealised."

This is a reference to the criticism by certain sections of the capitalist politicians in India (of the Swatantra Party, Jan Sangh, etc.) and their allies abroad that the Nehru government was pro-Communist because of its claim to be socialist and "non-aligned." Dr. Joshi's case is that the CPI did not take advantage of this "split" in the bourgeois camp to completely identify itself with the Nehru government to push forward its program of a middle path.

There was a strong faction within the CPI before its split in 1963 which even advocated the merger of the party with the Congress Party!

The charge that the "leftists" did not support the bourgeois rulers in building up the myth about the "middle path" is not correct. In fact traditional left parties, including the CPI, identified themselves with the "middle-path politics" of the Congress government, perhaps with criticism of some of its aspects. They did not develop struggles of workers and peasants against the bourgeois state. They supported its basic internal and external policies. Nehru was extolled as a leader of the third world committed to a third way of noncapitalist development!

Even today the CPI projects the perspective of a "national democracy" in India, based on an alliance of the working class with the other three classes, viz., the peasantry, the urban middle class, and the "national" bourgeoisie. It rejects the immediate perspective of a socialist revolution for India, a revolution aimed at overthrowing the existing capitalist property relations and establishment of social ownership of means of production under a workers' state. The theoreticians of the CPI maintain that capitalism in India has a progressive role to play in the present epoch in the struggles against imperialism and surviving elements of feudalism.

Indeed the internal policies of the CPI are largely conditioned by the international strategy of the Soviet bureaucracy, which has found it convenient to support the bourgeois rulers of the underdeveloped countries to bargain for advantages from the imperialist powers. For that matter, the "pro-Peking" CPI

(Marxists), which came into existence after the split, also rejects the program of a socialist revolution for India. It seeks to achieve a "People's Democratic Revolution" and creation of a state based on a "four-class alliance" inclusive of the "national bourgeoisie." Unlike the pro-Moscow CPI, which is prepared to share the leadership of its "National Democratic Front" with the "national bourgeoisie," the CPI (M) seeks to establish the hegemony of the proletariat over the "Peoples Democratic Front" of its concept. The CPI(M) also believes that the "national bourgeoisie" in India has a progressive role to play in the struggle against imperialism. Both the Khrushchevists and the Maoists seek to achieve the "first" stage, i.e., the bourgeois democratic stage of the Indian revolution, in alliance with the "national bourgeoisie."

Dr. Joshi echoes the same view in different language. His grievance is that the Khrushchevist and Maoist leaders of the two CPIs, as the real "architects" of the middle path, do not completely merge their forces with the "national bourgeoisie." He maintains that despite the lopsided capitalist development in India, the concept of a middle path need not be rejected even now but should be "redefined and given a new content"!

He has not given up hopes even after the Congress Party (which he still considers to be a symbol of the middle path) has found itself rejected by the people in the last general elections in most parts of the country. He thinks that "through appropriate pressures from all sections of national opinion" the Congress government itself can be made to implement the program of the middle path. "We must not overlook," he says, "notwithstanding the distortions of the past years that some of the important commanding heights of the economy continue to be in the hands of the state and this could be utilized for implementing the minimum programme of economic recovery and self-reliance"!

Here is a "middle-pather" who tenaciously sticks to his illusions despite the fact that they have been thoroughly exposed during the last two decades. The Congress Party which tried to implement the middle path is in shambles after its electoral debacle. The traditional left parties have found it convenient to ally themselves with various other capitalist parties and form "non-Congress" coalition ministries in some states like Kerala, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, etc. In their pursuit of the middle path they are engaged in the experiment of running the bourgeois state apparatus within a capitalist constitutional framework and are being exposed as defenders of bourgeois

property relations against the growing discontent of workers and peasants, at a time when the capitalist class as a whole is facing an unprecedented crisis.

None of the basic problems of the people—food, shelter, and unemployment—have been solved by the bourgeois state in India, despite the middle path of economic development it has pursued. Only a socialist revolution liquidating capitalist property relations can liberate the present stagnant productive forces while completing the democratic tasks left unfulfilled by the Indian bourgeoisie. But the traditional left, represented by the CPI and the CPI(M), refuses to accept this sole alternative. Instead it projects the middle path of a "national democracy" or a "people's democracy"—a so-called noncapitalist path of development. Dr. Joshi possibly voices the sentiments of a section of the official "Communist" movement when he pleads for a new coalition of the leftists with the bourgeois Congress Party in the name of utilizing the "important commanding heights of the economy" for "implementing the minimum programme of economic recovery and self-reliance" within the existing capitalist framework!

* * *

Is there really a "third way" or a middle path of development, as distinct from the socialist path shown by the October Revolution? In fact the question is no longer posed in this manner after the tragic developments in the third world—Algeria, Ghana, Indonesia, etc. The Cuban Revolution led by Castro has shattered this illusion and the revolutionary movement in Latin America is once again posing the positive path of socialist revolutions before the peoples of the third world.

What is this third world anyway? In the classical Stalinist literature it is described thus: "The national liberation revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America are powerful blows to imperialism and its colonial system. More than 1,500 million people have established freedom on the ruins of old colonial empires!" (*Peace, Freedom and Socialism*, March 1966.) The national liberation revolutions were indeed a serious blow to imperialism—a big step forward in the onward march of mankind. But how is this third world, built on the "ruins of old colonial empires," different from the classical capitalist world? Has it led to the liquidation of capitalism on a global scale or undermined its hegemony?

The end of the second world war saw an unprecedented revolutionary upsurge in the colonial world. The victory of

the socialist revolution in China and the integration of the East European states into the camp of the workers' states created a new situation. Threatened with extinction, the former colonial rulers, notably the British imperialists, adopted a new strategy of reaching a *modus vivendi* with the indigenous bourgeoisie of their former colonies. In countries like India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon, the British imperialists formally conferred political independence on the native bourgeois leaders. This process of "peaceful changeover" soon caught on in other colonial countries of Asia and Africa, greatly facilitated by the absence of a revolutionary leadership of the working class capable of leading the revolutionary upsurges in those countries to their logical culmination and by the betrayals of the Stalinist Communist parties wherever they existed. In fact, the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, through the official Communist parties, adopted a policy of seeking a compromise with the newly emerging bourgeois rulers.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution was accomplished by the Maoist leadership despite the negative antirevolutionary policies of the Kremlin bureaucracy in the postwar period. Stalin wanted the Chinese CP to enter into a coalition with the bourgeois Chiang Kai-shek. He recognized the Chinese Revolution only after it was a *fait accompli*. In Eastern Europe, occupied by the Red Army, no alternative was left for Stalin but to liquidate capitalist property relations by military-bureaucratic methods and install CP-led puppet regimes in those countries. This was done more as a defensive military strategy than as a conscious revolutionary orientation. The Stalinist bureaucracy in fact had pursued a deliberate policy through the European Communist parties of sabotaging proletarian revolutions in countries like Greece, France, Italy, etc., in collaboration with its Anglo-American imperialist allies immediately after the war ended. It was Stalinism that gave a new lease of life to capitalism, which was virtually dead in Western Europe.

For a brief period between 1948 and 1951 the Stalinist bureaucracy pursued an adventurist policy (the so-called Zhdanov line) as a part of its strategy of "cold war" in relation to the imperialist powers. When this strategy failed to yield results, Stalin evolved his famous theory of "peaceful coexistence" in relation to the capitalist world, which meant that the Soviet Union would "peacefully coexist" with the capitalist powers and help them maintain the *status quo* on a global scale. The

path of revolutionary movements against capitalism was given up once for all. The policy of "peaceful existence" continues ever since—as far as the Soviet bureaucracy is concerned—although its originator is dead and gone.

Neither the Stalinist bureaucracy, nor the Communist parties which drew political inspiration from it, had a positive policy in relation to the revolutionary upsurge in the colonial world. They, in fact, pursued a policy of limiting and restraining the upsurge. The Stalinist bureaucracy visualized the possibility of utilizing the new bourgeois rulers of the newly independent countries as yet another weapon in the cold war. It was thus that the grand concept of a third world emerged as a part of the international strategy of the Stalinist movement—a third world pursuing "its own distinct" way of economic development. Successors of Stalin from Khrushchev onwards have perfected this concept and given it a "new dimension."

This is how the theoreticians of the Stalinist movement have described the third world: "These new countries playing a growing role in international affairs are influencing the solution of world problems. Most of them support the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and actively support the movement for general and complete disarmament." (Fuad Nasser and Aziz Al-Hajj in *Peace, Freedom and Socialism*, March 1966) Thus the strategy has not been that of developing these national liberation movements into a global struggle for liquidating capitalism. The objective is limited: to utilize the bourgeois leaders of the newly independent countries to support the "principles of peaceful coexistence" of states with different social systems and its pacifist movement "for general and complete disarmament"!

Nehru, the leader of the Indian ruling class, the most developed among the newly independent bourgeoisies, was the first to react to the new Stalinist strategy in a big way. From a bourgeois standpoint Nehru saw great advantages from an alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy without at the same time having to break with the imperialist powers. He evolved his own strategy of "nonalignment," of striking a "middle path" in the power conflicts between the capitalist states and workers' states. This was later codified as "five principles" or "Panch Sheela"—sanctified by the big support it received from the Khrushchevist and the Maoist bureaucracies.

The extension of the colonial revolution from Asia to the countries of Africa led to the geographical extension of the so-

called nonaligned camp. The colonial powers, greatly weakened as a result of the world war and hard pressed by the liberation movements, thought it more expedient to follow the British example of reaching an understanding with the indigenous bourgeoisie of their colonies. The Dutch gave up Indonesia, the French withdrew from Indochina. The British and the French imperialists renounced their territorial control in most of their African colonies in the fifties.

The transfer of political power to the "indigenous elite," consisting of comparatively less developed bourgeois elements or middle-class entrepreneurs, gave rise to a variety of political regimes. A bonapartist regime like that of Nasser came into existence in Egypt, after it overthrew the semifeudal rule of King Farouk. A left-oriented Ben Bellist government assumed power in Algeria at the end of nearly ten years of civil war against French imperialism. Nkrumah established a virtual dictatorship in Ghana while claiming to be a "revolutionary nationalist." In Indonesia Sukarno's personal dictatorship was supported by both the extreme religious reaction and the powerful Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). Ne Win of Burma, who came to power as the result of a military coup, resorted to a program of radical economic reforms, including nationalization of a large sector of the Burmese economy. These regimes were in fact different variants of bourgeois states that emerged in the wide sweep of the colonial revolution. Because of the radical economic measures resorted to by some of them, an illusion was created, largely by the Stalinist movement, that they were striking a middle path of economic development.

Representatives of some of these third-world governments met in Bandung in 1956 with the blessings of both the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. Both the Khrushchevists and the Maoists thought that they had gained a distinct advantage over the imperialist powers in the cold war in having these "nonaligned" regimes grouped into a "bloc." They extended all possible economic and even military aid to some of these governments. In India, the CPI gave almost uncritical support to the bourgeois government led by Nehru. The Soviet Union has been sending a large quantity of economic and military aid to the country's bourgeois rulers. The Maoist bureaucracy in China has also pursued a similar policy in relation to the third world, although its attitude has undergone a change in recent years.

The Indian experiment is perhaps the best demonstration of the utter absurdity of the middle path. The Indian bourgeoisie could run a stable regime for nearly two decades, without a serious challenge from the proletariat. It could preserve a parliamentary system of government while the ruling classes in most of the other underdeveloped countries experienced serious political convulsions.

The middle-path policy has helped the bourgeoisie to consolidate its economic base during the last two decades. The indigenous capital assets, which stood at Rs. 9 billion in 1948 have risen to Rs. 35 billion in 1966.* But underdevelopment has not prevented the Indian capitalist class from projecting all the ugly features of modern capitalism. Monopolies have grown without being preceded by a dynamic growth, intensifying all the contradictions of advanced capitalism without most of its advantages in the form of accumulated resources and technology. The impact of capitalism on the distribution of income has been to increase inequalities between social classes.

Although the gross national wealth is supposed to have risen by 45 per cent since "independence," the per capita income has remained the lowest in the world. Its rate of growth is less than 3.5 per cent per annum, a rate which hardly keeps pace with the increase in population. As a result of the stagnant economy and the slow industrial growth rate which cannot absorb the growing labor population, India today faces a menacing problem of mass unemployment.

Under the garb of building a "socialist pattern of society" and "planning," the bourgeois rulers have built a heavily protected private industrial sector. Their strategy has been to build some basic industries like steel, machine tools, shipbuilding, etc., needing heavy capital investment, in the public sector with public funds to provide the necessary base for consumer and service industries to be developed by individual capitalists.

Yet whatever industrial development the Indian bourgeoisie could achieve has been on the basis of unbearable burdens imposed on primary producers, i.e., workers and peasants, and growing reliance on economic "aid" from capitalist countries. The government of India is indebted to the tune of Rs. 50 billion, more than 66 per cent of which is owed to the United States alone. The repayment of installments and interest

* The Indian rupee is worth approximately 13.3 U. S. cents.

on these loans work out at Rs. 4 billion per annum, which is half of the country's total earnings through exports and foreign trade. Thus economically the Indian bourgeoisie is no better than a satellite of U.S. imperialism at present. An identical pattern has emerged in all the nonaligned countries of the third world.

Private foreign investments in India have grown from Rs. 2.55 billion in 1948 to more than Rs. 10 billion in 1965-66. Of this, private investments from the United States alone have increased from a mere Rs. 110 million to Rs. 2.5 billion during the same period.

As against this growing economic dependence on imperialist powers, the total "aid" received by the Indian government from the Soviet Union and other workers' states has not exceeded Rs. 5 billion since 1952—an "aid" utilized by the bourgeois rulers more as a political weapon to bargain for better terms from their imperialist benefactors.

On the agricultural front the bourgeois rulers have totally collapsed. Despite the large funds invested on prestige irrigation projects, dams, etc., they have to import large quantities of food grain under the PL 480 program from the United States to feed the people in a country which has been predominantly agricultural. As we have already pointed out, attempts to bourgeoisify agriculture have only accentuated the agricultural crisis. The bourgeois state has paid fabulous compensation of about Rs. 6 billion to the statutory landlords in the name of abolishing feudal *zamindari* while passing this huge burden to the landless peasants who were to acquire land as owners. Even this "land redistribution" reform has remained largely on paper without seriously undermining concentration of ownership in land. About 5 per cent of the rural households at the top hold even today as much as 47.5 per cent of the total land under cultivation, while nearly 30 per cent of the rural households hold no land at all.

But the low productivity of agriculture in India—as in other underdeveloped countries—is not caused by the "feudal" or "traditional" attitudes and behavior of the agricultural population (as is made out by middle-path economists like Dr. Joshi) or because of the exclusion of new landowners from the capitalist market. On the contrary, it results from the integration of agriculture with the capitalist market, which impels rich peasants and landlords, who control resources for greater production, to channel them into other spheres yielding better

profits. Thus the root of underdevelopment in general in countries like India is capitalism, and the growing agricultural crisis (food shortage, etc.) is only a by-product of that underdevelopment which cannot be resolved within the capitalist framework.

The political implications of this analysis are obvious. The "national bourgeoisie" in an underdeveloped country being the very source of exploitation and underdevelopment, it can neither be "progressive" (as stressed by the Khrushchevist and Maoist CPs) nor can it be an ally of the proletariat which alone can undertake a bold program of economic development and ensure social equality and economic freedom to the exploited strata. A realistic revolutionary strategy basing itself on this analysis would, therefore, exclude the bourgeoisie from any important position in the struggle and would rely fundamentally on an alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

* * *

Peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism is a social-democratic theory which has been borrowed by the international Stalinist movement. The theory has been "improved upon" by suggesting that capitalism in an underdeveloped country can be undermined by gradual stages, provided the (bourgeois) state itself resorts to measures of nationalization of the economy in stages. That explains the enthusiastic support the Stalinists and their fellow travelers extend to the public sector in these countries.

Dr. Joshi, whose views we have quoted, maintains for example that the "important commanding heights of the economy," continuing to be in the hands of the state, could be "utilized" for implementing the minimum program of socialism. Thus a peaceful "structural change" of the capitalist economy is envisaged by him. Therefore, according to him, there is no need for the proletariat to make a socialist revolution in countries like India, Egypt, Burma, Algeria (?), Indonesia (?), etc., and establish its own state, i.e., dictatorship of the proletariat, in transition from capitalism to socialism. Lenin's theory of the state has been completely revised by the neo-Stalinists.

This constitutes the most fatal deviation of the Stalinist movement from Marxism, apart from its political subservience to the foreign-policy exigencies of the Soviet or the Chinese bureaucracies, which further helps it to rationalize such deviation. A section of the non-Stalinist Marxist movement also commits

the error of visualizing the possibility of some of these bonapartist bourgeois regimes in countries like Egypt, Burma, etc., being transformed into workers' states without the masses having to pass through the processes of a socialist revolution led by a revolutionary Marxist party of the proletariat. It is therefore necessary to examine this problem more closely from a Marxist-Leninist point of view.

Capitalist production, it must be remembered, arose and developed within the womb of feudal society, or of feudal society which had been half disintegrated by commodity economy, many decades before the bourgeois revolutions. This can be said also of the development of merchant capital, as the necessary preliminary stage of capitalist production.

Bourgeois revolutions, in fact, began after capitalism had gone far in building up its system in the economic sphere. The bourgeois revolution was a climactic point in the process of bourgeois development, which began long before bourgeois revolutions and went on more rapidly after them.

Preobrazhensky, an outstanding Soviet economist of the pre-Stalin period, has explained the phenomenon thus: "The socialist system, on the contrary, begins its chronology with the seizure of power by the proletariat. This follows from the very essence of the socialist economy as a single complex which cannot be built up molecularly within the world of capitalism. While merchant capital could develop in the pores of feudal society, while the first capitalist enterprises could function without coming into irreconcilable contradiction with the existing political structure and property-forms . . . the complex of state socialist production can appear only as a result of a breaking through of the old system all along the line, only as a result of social revolution. This fact is of colossal significance for understanding not only the genesis of socialism, but also the entire subsequent process of socialist construction."*

The question is often posed in India: Are Marxists opposed to nationalization of certain sectors of the economy under capitalism? They are not. In fact, they advance the slogan of nationalization as a tactic. At the same time, Marxists do not equate measures by the bourgeois state to nationalize sectors of its economy with socialism. The public sector of the economy in a capitalist society basically subserves the needs of capitalism. This is the case not only in the underdeveloped coun-

* E. Preobrazhensky, *The New Economics*, translated by Brian Pearce, London: Oxford, 1965, pp. 79-80.

tries where nationalization becomes an important weapon of capital formation in the hands of the bourgeois state, but also in advanced capitalist countries where the bourgeoisie has better accumulated resources.

Let us quote Preobrazhensky further on the subject: "The nationalization of large-scale industry is also the first act of socialist accumulation, that is, the act which concentrates in the hands of the state the minimum resources needed for the organization of socialist leadership of industry. But it is just here that we come up against the other aspect of the question. *In socializing large-scale production the proletarian state by that very act changes from the start the system of ownership of the means of production: it adapts the system of ownership to its future steps in the matter of socialist reconstruction of the whole economy. In other words, the working class acquires by revolution only that which capitalism already possessed in the shape of the institution of private property, without any revolution, on the basis of feudalism.*"*

There is a world of difference between nationalization under a capitalist state and nationalization by a workers' state. Just as the steps taken by Nazi Germany to nationalize sectors of the German economy should not be confused with social ownership, nationalization of some industries, insurance companies, or even credit institutions like banks by the bourgeois states in underdeveloped countries (Burma, India, Egypt, etc.) should not be mistaken for socialism. If the Indian example is any yardstick, creation of a sizable public sector is an indispensable strategy of the bourgeoisie of these countries to acquire a minimum economic base for itself.

The existence of a nationalized sector might, theoretically speaking, help the future workers' state to reorganize the economy *after a socialist revolution*, just as the existence of large-scale cartels and joint-stock companies would render their transformation into social property under a workers' state easier. But the extension of the public sector cannot be the objective of the proletariat under capitalism, just as extension of cartels or joint-stock monopolies cannot be its slogan in advanced capitalist countries. The process of transforming private ownership of means of production into social ownership cannot be said to have been even initiated in the real sense of the word *without the proletariat first seizing state power from the bourgeoisie*. The recent developments in the underdeveloped

* *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81, emphasis added.

countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia have shown that the public sector, far from being an instrument of social change, can serve as an effective lever for the ruling bourgeoisie, in collaboration with its imperialist "allies," to establish its economic stranglehold over the masses and to stage military coups when it is confronted with a revolutionary challenge by the proletariat.

To sum up, the so-called third world of newly independent nations that emerged in the postwar period cannot be considered as a separate entity independent of the rest of the capitalist world of which it has always remained an integral part. The so-called third way or middle path these countries have pursued has been nothing but a capitalist path of development, modulated to suit different socioeconomic conditions prevailing in different countries, without affecting their basic alignment with international capitalism. The path of capitalist development has proved disastrous to the "underdeveloped" people. The only path of progress open for them is the path shown by the October Revolution; the path of a socialist revolution minus the colossal distortion of Stalinism through which the Soviet people had to pass.

The Cuban Revolution has also demonstrated the correctness of this statement in a most positive way. When Cuba broke away from the middle path, it had to resort to a socialist path of development. The other Latin-American countries which failed to follow the Cuban example have been forcibly integrated into the now discredited camp of imperialist satellites. The heroic people of Vietnam have decisively broken with the middle path and are waging a life-and-death war for the liquidation of imperialism, along the path of a socialist revolution.

Let us repeat the prophetic words Leon Trotsky wrote in May 1940, while discussing the prospects of the Latin-American revolution. They hold good even today. "Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semi-colonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan countries and with the world working class as a whole. Only this can lead the oppressed people to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over. A victory of the international proletariat will deliver the colonial countries from the long drawn-out travail of the capitalist development by opening up the possibility of arriving at socialism hand in hand with the proletariat of the advanced countries." (*Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War*)

10. THE UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

By George Novack

All social formations and their component parts have undergone irregular development. This is a universal feature of history and a fundamental law of its dialectical process, which has its ultimate material source in the variable growth of the forces of production.*

The deep disproportions that have accumulated in all sectors of society through the ages have been coalesced, accentuated, and brought to a head under world capitalism. The totality of their effects is being sharply manifested during this system's decline, which overlaps the first stage in the transition to socialism.

Uneven Development in the Bourgeois Epoch

The extremely variegated growth of capitalist relations and power in different parts of the globe is the underlying historical cause for the contradictory course being taken by the socialist revolution. From the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries indigenous capitalism rose to its full stature only in Western Europe, North America, and Japan. It was retarded in Eastern Europe and the Iberian peninsula, and barely got off the ground in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

This disparity of capitalist development decisively shaped the march of events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The older, richer, and more favored capitalist powers carved up the planet for themselves, stunted and distorted the growth of the less advanced nations, and blocked their progress.

By 1914 the world had been split into a few plutocratic giants enjoying a monopoly of industrial capacity, wealth, and power, with the majority of humankind suffering from both precapitalist stagnation and imperialist domination and depredation. Their confrontation set the stage for the first round of revolutions in which those peoples who had lagged far behind the industrialized metropolises began to turn the tables and deal

*See *Uneven and Combined Development in History* by George Novack, Merit Publishers, New York, 1966, for an extensive exposition of this topic.

staggering blows to the imperialist system.

Those who bemoan the crawling pace and jagged path of the proletarian struggle for power need reminding—if ever they knew—that the mass democratic movements that marked the formative stages of capitalism and gave hegemony to the bourgeoisie went through an even more protracted and twisted development. It took more than three centuries for the antifeudal forces to unfold their full potential and for the Western magnates of capital to acquire mastery.

The first period of bourgeois democratic revolutions was inaugurated by the uprising of the Low Countries against Spanish dominion in the late sixteenth century and culminated in the two English revolutions of the seventeenth century. One hundred years later, bourgeois revolutionary energies reached their peak with the American War of Independence, the first victorious colonial revolt of modern times, and the decisive French Revolution, which broke the spine of the European feudal order. The era came to a close during the series of wars and revolutions from 1848 to the Paris Commune of 1871, with the Civil War in the United States the foundry in which the present colossus of world capitalism was forged.

The progressive camp and its plebeian elements experienced many setbacks during this upward climb. The big bourgeoisie, which was the ultimate victor, at times saw the political power it had won slip from its grasp into the hands of its rivals. That happened, for instance, when the Northern merchants, bankers, and manufacturers of the United States were shoved aside at Washington by the Southern cotton planters and their accomplices in the decades before the Civil War.

Even after three hundred years of struggle for republican democracy, political regimes the world over were not transformed as much as the social structures. As late as 1848, monarchy, either absolute or constitutional, still remained overwhelmingly the most common mode of governing states, except on the American continent—and even there Brazil had an emperor. The crowned heads were not removed from Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Russia until the first world war and the advent of the first proletarian revolution.

Nevertheless, the precapitalist order was overthrown and its major institutions eliminated by these successive endeavors spanning the centuries. The basic acquisitions of the revolutionary process proved enduring; the reverses transitory. The "new men of power" had taken over the civilized world by the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

But the bourgeoisie did not everywhere conquer political sovereignty. It is widely believed that a capitalist democracy, headed by the captains of industry, trade, and finance, is an obligatory stage in the political advancement of all enlightened nations. This preconception is strongest in the United States.

Actually, the bourgeoisie has managed to win and retain political preeminence largely in the most privileged capitalist nations. Elsewhere, this possessing class arrived too late and with too little to dislodge its rivals to the right or its challengers on the left and concentrate state power in its own hands.

This default was first and most saliently evidenced in Russia. Up to 1917 the Russian bourgeoisie had to bow before the Czar and the landlords. Its representatives could not wield power in their own right between February and October and lost the last chance of taking command of the state when the worker-peasant revolt led by the Bolsheviks kicked out the Provisional Government and set up the first Soviet Republic. The impotence of a belated bourgeois rulership has been subsequently demonstrated in China and elsewhere.

Since the democratic revolution was able to reorganize the social and political structures of only a restricted number of countries along progressive bourgeois lines, the rest of humanity, tormented by backwardness, has been driven in this century to find other ways and means of hacking a path to modernity. The unevennesses, inequities, and iniquities of capitalist development have transmitted to the next epoch of world revolution the unfinished historical tasks of bringing the more backward countries into the mainstream of civilization. This is directed not to the expansion and consolidation of capitalism, but to its constriction and abolition.

Irregular Evolution in the First Stages of Socialist Struggle

The lopsided evolution which characterized the four centuries of bourgeois democratic revolution has been extended in exaggerated form to the first stages of the international proletarian revolution. Over the past century and a half the prerequisites for the socialist revolution have come into being and matured in an extremely dispersed and disparate manner. On one hand, this irregularity has served to weaken the latent strength of the anticapitalist camp, hamper its forward march, and impart anomalous forms to its development. But it has also had positive results by bringing together unusual alignments of social forces that have exerted tremendous power, speeded up the revo-

lutionary process at certain conjunctures, and secured unexpected victories over the class enemy.

The heterogeneity of its different national sections was already evidenced in the infancy of the working-class movement. Although during most of the nineteenth century the wage workers were more numerous and strongest in England, France, and the United States, their class consciousness and ideological level were low.

Marxism, the scientific method of socialist thought and action, did not originate in these industrially advanced countries but in the more retarded environment of Germany. Its ideas made their way haltingly and superficially among the socialist vanguard in France during the last quarter of the century. The discrepancy between the theoretical equipment and the latent social power of the workers in England and the United States has been far from mended to this day. Fabian empiricism and insularity still dominate the British labor movement while the crassest pragmatism and opportunism prevail across the Atlantic.

When Marx and Engels published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, Western Europe was the exclusive theater of proletarian revolutionary activity. Russia and the United States—the two titans of the twentieth century—were given only marginal mention in the original text of that epoch-making programmatic document. The shifts in the revolutionary center of gravity since then indicate how the imbalance in the distribution of the forces ready for socialism has persisted.

Both the First and Second Internationals, the earliest political organizations of the world working class, had their seats of strength entirely in Western Europe. The outlying regions did not count for much in that preliminary phase of the mobilization of the proletarian forces.

Although the Labor and Socialist International rested on a mass base, it was predominantly a white man's organization that had few ties and little concern with the colonial masses. The most radical sections came from the perimeter of Europe: Russia and Poland. Its mainstay and model, the German social democracy, was the undisputed leader of the workers, a close partner of the unions, and performed a prodigious work of organization and indoctrination. But its leaders' talents in these fields were not equaled by their foresight, courage, revolutionary will, and internationalism. These deficiencies proved to be the undoing of German social democracy and the Second International in August 1914 and thereafter.

Although the Russian working class was not so large and

cultured and could not create such powerful mass organizations as the German, it had since 1903 acquired something far more precious and decisive: a firm, farsighted, and audacious leadership in the Bolshevik team. When the strains and disasters of the first world war provoked the insurrection of the Russian masses, Lenin's party was able to make the most of the opportunities it offered for the overthrow of the old order.

In the first chapter of *The History of the Russian Revolution*, "Peculiarities of Russia's Development," Trotsky has explained how the conjoined proletarian and peasant uprisings grew out of the unequal development of capitalist imperialism, which imposed objectives upon the backward state and society of Russia exceeding the strength and endurance of all its possessing classes, from the landed nobility to the weak bourgeoisie. Under the mounting stresses of the czarist government's participation in the imperialist dogfight, the most vulnerable pillar of world capitalism collapsed and the revolutionary epoch burst in through the most weakly barricaded door.

"Russia took the road of proletarian revolution," Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed*, "not because her economy was the first to become ripe for a socialist change, but because she could not develop further on a capitalist basis. Socialization of the means of production had become a necessary condition for bringing the country out of barbarism." Thus "the law of uneven development brought it about that the contradiction between the technique and property relations of capitalism shattered the weakest link in the world chain. Russian capitalism was the first to pay for the bankruptcy of world capitalism."

It turned out that the Russian people likewise had to pay a terrible price for their primacy in the order of socialist revolution. The very unevennesses of historical development that propelled Russia ahead of the more advanced countries, enabling it to install the first workers' government and nationalize the means of production, took their revenge subsequently. The new economy moved forward by fits and starts, now dragging along, now spurting ahead at the cost of tremendous sacrifices, but all too slowly to bridge the enormous gap between the low level of productive power and the elementary needs of the people.

Because of the international isolation and national backwardness of the Soviet Union, its revolutionary vanguard was thrown back and crushed. "The establishment of socialist forms of property in the backward country came up against the inadequate level of technique and culture. Itself born of the contra-

dictions between high world productive forces and capitalist forms of property, the October Revolution produced in its turn a contradiction between low national productive forces and socialist forms of property." (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*)

The resultant political regression was consummated by Stalin's bureaucratic despotism. The counterrevolutionary conservatism that sapped the Russian Revolution was itself a consequence of the arrested development of the international struggle for workers' power. The revolutionary movements from 1918 to 1923 failed to overthrow capitalism in any of the highly industrialized countries of Western Europe. The isolation of the Soviet Union was reinforced by the ensuing stabilization of world capitalism, the train of defeats suffered by the socialist forces, and the spread of fascism in the years before the second world war.

It appeared to many that the proletarian revolution was doomed to remain indefinitely locked within the borders of the USSR. This belief was the psychological source of the conception of building socialism in one country, improvised in 1924 by Stalin to justify the usurpation of power by the Soviet bureaucracy and the subjugation of the international Communist movement to its narrow national dictates. The practice and theory of autarchic socialism expressed both the ideological and political relapse of the revolutionary process in Russia and the episodic but drawn-out retardation in the advancement of the world socialist revolution.

The next wave of revolutionary victories, which surged up from 1943 on, shattered the objective basis for upholding one-country socialism. At the same time, the struggles after World War II extended to the more backward areas of the world the anticapitalist revolutions initiated by the October 1917 overturn. The peoples most meagerly developed along capitalist lines became the promptest and most eligible candidates for socialist revolution. The storm center of revolution shifted to the East rather than to the West—from Eastern Europe to China, Vietnam, and Korea.

The colonial world became the hearth of revolutionary activity, while the most highly industrialized and richest parts of world economy remained in the clutches of imperialism. This turn of events lifted the state of siege from the Soviet Union and opened bright new vistas to the colonial masses. But the split between East and West kept the postcapitalist regimes confined to the least developed countries.

Thus, on a more magnified scale and higher historical plane, the workers' states, separately and together, continued to be

ringed by world imperialism. The unremitting pressures exerted by the class enemy had injurious effects upon the new revolutionary regimes; they could not avoid being deformed from their birth to one degree or another by their own material and cultural backwardness and the influence of Stalinism. These deformations were strongest in Eastern Europe and China.

The interweaving of the favorable and unfavorable effects of uneven development can be discerned in the unfolding of the socialist revolution in Cuba. This island was the last country in Latin America to be liberated from Spanish domination; it was the first to be liberated from capitalist exploitation. The decadence of world Stalinism discredited the Cuban Communist party as the fresh young leadership of the July 26th Movement was stimulated to take the helm of the popular revolution and keep propelling it forward.

Unfortunately, its example has yet to be duplicated in Latin America. This has kept the Castro regime isolated in the Western Hemisphere and imperiled by Washington's economic blockade and threat of intervention, despite the aid received from other workers' states. The extension of the socialist revolution through Latin America is, as Havana recognizes, imperative both for the salvation of the peoples of that continent and the healthy internal growth of the new Cuba itself.

The Dynamics of World Revolution Today

The disabilities arising from the disproportionate tempos in diverse zones of the revolutionary process are more conspicuous today than ever. Fifty years after the October victory the Third World pulses with revolutionary ardor and energies while opportunist conservatism dominates the Soviet bloc. The working-class movements and parties in the major capitalist countries remain largely unresponsive to the demands of the world struggle for socialism. The political atomization of the masses in the Communist countries, coupled with the passivity of the workers in the strongholds of imperialism, deprive the revolutionary elements in the colonial lands of their most powerful potential allies, permitting the imperialists and their native accomplices to bolster neocolonialism and set back liberation movements from the Congo to Southeast Asia.

While the antidemocratic features of the bureaucratized workers' states reduce the attractiveness of socialism for the Western masses, the unequal economic levels among the Communist countries embitter their mutual relations. This is one of the root causes of the Sino-Soviet split.

Official Soviet sociologists maintain that, whereas capitalism is subject to the law of uneven development, the existing workers' states operate under the opposite law of even development. Thus G. Glazemann writes in *The Laws of Social Development* (English edition, p. 238): "Revisionists ignore the basic fact that the law of uneven economic and political development has ceased to operate within the framework of the world socialist system, that the socialist countries are now governed by a new law, the law of the evening out of their economic and cultural development."

Such an assertion "ignores the basic facts" about the USSR itself, where the growth of heavy industry has oustripped that of light industry, services, and agriculture. It is certainly untrue of the political evolution of the Soviet Union where Soviet and party democracy was destroyed by Stalinist despotism, a relapse which, despite the reforms and economic and cultural advances of recent years, has still to be overcome in essentials.

No less unfounded is the pronouncement that a general law of proportionate development prevails between Communist countries. Planned economy does contain the potential of a balanced growth, especially if it is combined with control by the working people over economic and political policy. But, singly or collectively, the workers' states remain a long way from such symmetry. Most flagrant is the contrast between the Soviet Union and China, which today stand at opposite ends of the scale in economic development.

Soviet aid was a boon to China's economic progress in the first period of the revolution, and its withdrawal was reprehensible. But even with closer and continued cooperation the two major Communist countries cannot command enough resources to overcome the wide gap in their economic levels and march side by side to socialism. That is a global revolutionary task.

Sino-Soviet relations have been adversely affected more than their leaders wish to admit by the still restricted scope of the world revolution which reinforces the deficiencies inherited from past backwardness. These *objective* sources of their frictions have been considerably irritated and intensified by the narrowly nationalistic outlook and overbearing bureaucratic behavior of their respective leaderships.

It is the paramount task of the entire transitional period from capitalism to socialism to iron out the vast disproportions between the rich and poor sectors of humanity along with the inequalities within each country. It is imperative to acknowledge the gravity and explain the difficulty of this problem and pub-

licly discuss what short-term and long-range measures are required for the best available solutions. But the false orientations of the Soviet and Chinese Communist parties have kept them from bringing this fundamental issue into the spotlight. It would puncture the illusory perspective of constructing socialism or communism in a single country and pose sharply and squarely the indispensability of spreading the revolution to the centers of capitalism. To make such a preoccupation central smacks too much of the "heresy" of Trotskyism, even though it accords with the views of Marx and Lenin.

Three main processes today contribute to the promotion of the world revolution—the actions and reactions of their driving forces serve either to accelerate or delay its total development. These are the colonial revolution, the political revolution aiming at the democratization of the degenerated or deformed workers' states, and the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries.

Their complex interaction is delineated as follows in the resolution on the "Dynamics of World Revolution Today," adopted by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International, June 1963: "The delay of the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries has in general undoubtedly prevented the colonial revolution from taking the socialist road as quickly and consciously as would have been possible under the influence of a powerful revolutionary upsurge or victory of the proletariat in an advanced country. This same delay also retards the maturing of the political revolution in the USSR, especially inasmuch as it does not place before the Soviet workers a convincing example of an alternative way to build socialism. Finally, the upsurge of the colonial and political revolutions, hampered by the delay of the proletarian revolution in the West, nevertheless contributes in helping the proletariat in the imperialist countries to overcome the delay."

The major tendencies competing for the allegiance of the class-conscious workers offer quite different answers to the problems presented by the disparity of development among these three sectors of the struggle for socialism. Since 1956 the Moscow leaders have vigorously propagated the conception, first promulgated by Stalin, that the advancement of the international revolution is no longer the axis and aim of the anti-capitalist camp. They preach that in the course of time the Soviet Union, which has supposedly already reached socialism and is on the way to communism, would provide such an alluring showcase of the splendors and benefits of the new society that the peoples still under the capitalist yoke will cast it off like an outworn cloak—and almost as easily.

Meanwhile, peaceful coexistence between Communist and capitalist governments on the international arena, implemented by class collaboration with "peace-loving, progressive elements" among the imperialist and neocolonialist bourgeoisies, is to be the principal guideline for Communist strategy.

This is utopianism of the purest hue. Just as Owen, Fourier, and their like believed that the example and achievements of their model cooperative communities would win over or neutralize the big property owners, draw all reasonable citizens to them, and spread by imitation in a peaceable way, so Khrushchev, Kosygin, Brezhnev, and their followers suggest that the shining example of Soviet progress will come to prevail without the necessity for intransigent revolutionary struggle. They envisage the bad example of force being replaced by the force of good example.

This Stalinist line disorients and demoralizes the world struggle against capitalism in two ways. First, its advice to rely upon alliance with the "progressive" elements of the bourgeoisie disarms the masses and aids their enemies. This has been demonstrated by catastrophic defeats since 1964 in colonial countries from Brazil to Indonesia. Its folly was shown by the support accorded President Johnson by the American CP in the 1964 presidential campaign on the ground that he would be less "trigger-happy" in Vietnam than his Republican opponent.

Second, it proposes to leave the task of disarming the monopolists and militarists to "summit" negotiations and diplomatic pacts between Washington and Moscow. No governmental agreements between the "Big Two" can guarantee world peace. Like the partial nuclear test ban of 1963, they can even be tacitly directed against the sovereign rights of the People's Republic of China. The atomaniacs heading the United States can be permanently deprived of their power to work evil and annihilate the human race with their H-bomb arsenal only if the American working people are organized in a movement to take economic, political, and military control of the country away from them.

The Maoists advocate, at least in words, a more militant strategy for world revolution than do their adversaries in the Kremlin. Yet they have displayed serious shortcomings in theory and practice. Even in countries closest to them in Asia, they have not consistently advised the independent mobilization of the masses for the taking of power, but have fostered reliance upon bourgeois leaders, like Sukarno, who may be friendly to Peking. This attitude led to tragic consequences in Indonesia.

Contrary to the teachings of Marx and Lenin, the Maoists regard the colonial revolution not as the area of most intense and important revolutionary activity and accomplishment at the present stage, but as the paramount force in the world movement for socialism. They depreciate or dismiss the fundamental factor which both shapes the prevailing international balance of forces and can bring about the successful outcome of the world revolution: the class relations in the imperialist strongholds.

Thus, in an editorial article commemorating the first anniversary of Defense Minister Lin Piao's celebrated programmatic document "Long Live the Victory of a People's War," the newspaper *Jenmin Jih Pao* wrote in September 1966 that the big battle between people who accounted for more than 90 per cent of the world's population and United States imperialism was the "decisive battle between revolution and counter-revolution on which hinges the future of the world." It was also said to be the decisive battle between "socialism and capitalist imperialism."

Both for its benefits to the most oppressed nations and the blows it delivers to imperialism, the colonial revolution has colossal historical significance and class consequences. But it would be incorrect for a Marxist to regard its course and outcome as *ultimately decisive* in the world struggle for workers' power and socialism.

The superiority of the program and perspectives of the Fourth International, which views the dynamics of the revolutionary process in its entirety through all its historical twists and turns, is demonstrated on this crucial issue. It never loses sight of the truth that the development of the proletarian struggle for supremacy *within the imperialist countries* is of cardinal importance for the world revolution. The economic, military, and diplomatic successes scored by the existing workers' states and their colonial allies are mighty spurs to progress, and foundation stones of socialism. But the key to permanent peace and the construction of a democratic socialist society of abundance on a global basis lies within the capitalist centers, above all in the United States. The missile crisis of 1962 and the escalation of the war in Southeast Asia should have driven home this lesson.

Revolutionary Prospects

The international revolution and the social structures issuing

from it promise to be as full of incongruities and imbalances in the second half-century of the breakup of the old order as in the first. How are these pronounced disproportions to be dealt with?

Marxism teaches that the inescapable contradictions of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism can be lessened and overcome only by broadening and deepening the revolutionary processes. Any national state, no matter how great its resources, is too narrow a framework for the building of a harmonious socialist society which will be in all decisive respects superior to and stronger than the most advanced capitalist countries. The only way out of its internal difficulties and external dilemmas will be found on the international arena. This is the principal lesson to be derived from the economic and political experiences of the Soviet Union during its first fifty years—and it is also the gist of the theory of the permanent revolution.

The workers in the highly industrialized countries have an indispensable role to play in easing and eventually eliminating the multiple deficiencies and distortions engendered by the paucity of productive power in the less-developed areas. On the one hand, their conquest of power would remove the terrible threats and pressures exerted by the ever aggressive imperialists. On the other hand, they can through international planning supply essential material aid for arriving most quickly at effective solutions of the excruciating problems presented by the restriction of the anticapitalist revolutions to the poorer parts of the world.

The underlying assumption of the Kremlin's policy of peaceful coexistence—and of social-democratic reformism—is that national and world politics will be more calm, peaceful and reasonably regulated in the decades ahead than between 1917 and 1967. This might be—if there were not as many explosive elements lodged in international and class relations as in military technology. The diversity of crises inherent in the contradictions of a hard-pressed capitalist system can produce abrupt and deep-going shifts in the balance of class forces which will considerably speed up the timetable of revolution—and counter-revolution—in unexpected ways and places. Who thought in 1950 that Cuba would enter the path to socialism by the end of the decade?

The drawbacks of disproportionate development are not one-sided. If they favor the opponents of socialism at one point, they can seriously cripple them at another. In the showdown

the defenders of capitalism in Russia, Yugoslavia, China, and Cuba found themselves without sufficient means to save their sources of power and became casualties of the operation of the law of uneven and combined development.

Disproportions in historical development create as many opportunities as obstacles for the forces of progress. They lay the groundwork for the emergence of unusual conjunctures of circumstances and combinations of elements that can give rise to startling novelties and sharp reversals of fortune. Thus in the last part of the nineteenth century Japan burst from feudal isolation and rushed into a feverish capitalist career which culminated in a catastrophe for its overambitious imperialists. Meanwhile China remained enchained by backwardness, the victim of subjugation and division by foreign powers, including Japan.

Then, under the shocks of the Japanese invasion and the second world war and through the catapult of their third revolution, the Chinese people vaulted beyond capitalism and outstripped defeated Japan in their social and political regime. Is it warranted to assume that the dialectical differentials in the evolution of these neighboring countries has now been brought to a halt? Or will the further dynamics of history see resurgent Japanese capitalism stumble once again and enter so severe an internal crisis that its workers and farmers will be impelled to throw off monopolist rule and leap ahead of Communist China in their economy and political democracy?

Or consider the revolutionary prospects of the Southern Africans who may be among the last on that turbulent continent to be freed of their oppressors. They cannot win political independence and self-determination except by waging as harsh and long an armed struggle as in Algeria. Once launched on a mass scale, the liberation movement, which has been so long delayed and suppressed, may well pass to a high ideological and political level precisely because it must contend against so ferocious and formidable a foe and comes after so many diverse revolutionary and counterrevolutionary experiences in Africa and elsewhere.

South Africa is the most industrially advanced country on the continent. Its several million black workers are closely associated with the peasantry in the reserves. In the absence of any black bourgeoisie or even a substantial urban petty bourgeoisie, a neocolonialist evolution along native capitalist lines is a most unlikely alternative.

Under such conditions, an alignment of social forces arrayed against the unyielding regime of the white exploiters and deter-

mined to overthrow it at any cost would provide the objective basis for a revolutionary alliance of workers and peasants on the Russian model. With leadership such as the Bolsheviks gave, the program, outlook, and achievements of the South African freedom movement could make a gigantic leap beyond any thus far attained on the continent, break most sharply and fully with all capitalist interests, and become the vanguard of socialist revolution in Africa.

An alert revolutionary leadership should foresee and prepare for "quantum jumps" in the relations of class forces which result from preceding disproportions of development, and utilize them for the conquest of power. Will such qualitative changes be confined to the colonial and neocolonialist countries?

This has become an article of faith with many anticapitalists whose outlook is based on the assumption that the practical struggle for socialism in our time is the exclusive prerogative of the Third World. They see little or no chance of the working class under neocapitalist affluence becoming a history-making force.

Since every successful revolution in this century has taken place in the less-developed lands, they conclude that this persistent pattern will not be violated or complicated by the outbreak of revolution and the establishment of workers' power in any major capitalist country. They have converted into its opposite Marx's expectation that the socialist revolution would begin in the most advanced countries. They prescribe that henceforward it must travel undeviatingly from the extremities to the heartlands of imperialism or, as the Maoists put it, from the peoples' war in the countryside to the cities.

They have a short memory. Twenty years ago, from 1943 to 1947, the masters of capitalism were alarmed by the imminent prospect of working-class uprisings in Western Europe. This danger to their rule was removed thanks to timely aid from Stalin and the Communist parties and then by the reconstruction and reinforcement of the capitalist economy. But that possibility lurks below the surface and can rise up again.

The neat diagram of universal priorities that fixes the labor movement of the West at the end of the revolutionary line can also be upset by sudden turns in the class struggle. The coming decades should provide some surprises of this sort for both the foes and the friends of socialism. The different sectors of neocapitalism may not be quite so impervious to the consequences of class antagonisms as they appear during the exceptionally prolonged postwar expansion.

The supreme testing ground will, of course, be the United States. As the richest, strongest, most stable sector of capitalism, it has long been considered immune to structural transformation. The Gibraltar of imperialism would stand fast in the future regardless of the storms raging elsewhere.

However, it is open to question whether the United States is destined to remain indefinitely separated from the world-historical movement toward socialism, when it is up to its ears in every other important international development. Indeed, the consequences of its reckless and far-ranging activities in safeguarding a declining capitalist system against socialism, promise to accelerate an eventual internal radicalization.

The administrators of the ruling class have pledged unlimited resources against the advance of the anticapitalist forces on all fronts. Will Washington be able to carry out this gigantic historical assignment successfully — or will the incalculable obligations involved exceed the capacities of the colossus of capitalism and boomerang against it?

In projecting their revolutionary strategy for Latin America, the Cuban leaders have insisted on the vulnerability of an overextended Yankee imperialism. It will not have, they predict, the necessary strength to check all the uprisings of the oppressed peoples. "It has had to employ 245,000 men in order to confront the heroism of the people of a country as small as Vietnam. [The number reached 525,000 early in 1968.] How many divisions and how many men will they need to confront a whole continent? How many situations similar to that of Vietnam can imperialism face simultaneously? What will happen when not one but several, and even the greater part of the peoples of the Continent, take the road of revolutionary action? How many U. S. soldiers will have to die in the mountains or on the plains of the Americas defending a system of exploitation which is not theirs and which oppresses them as well, and which has in addition gained universal reprobation?"

It is already evident that the American nation is not one reactionary bloc solidly united behind the monopolists and militarists, as it appeared in the heyday of McCarthyism. The escalation in Southeast Asia has not only provoked differences on the commanding heights but generated deep antiwar sentiments which have spurred radical students and intellectuals into protest and are seeping into the conscript army. One of the major potential anticapitalist forces, the twenty-two million Afro-Americans, has embarked on a stubborn struggle for black power and equality.

The most inscrutable and anomalous element in American society is the working class, which is unique in world labor history. It numbers tens of millions, is highly skilled, powerfully unionized, and capable of tremendous militancy. Yet, because of special historical circumstances and privileges, its political and ideological development lags far behind the ripeness of the American economy for socialization and the consciousness of its fellow workers in other lands. The American labor movement remains without any independent political organization or socialist inspiration.

Conservative mentalities, including many in left circles, conclude from its present condition that the American working class must be dismissed as a revolutionary factor. Marxists have the opposite outlook. They anticipate that this giant will be roused from its slumber and that when it manages to break loose from antiquated ideas and attachments and launches a large-scale offensive against big business and its government, the virile new generation of labor militants can rush through or skip over intervening stages of social-democratic or Stalinist politics that workers elsewhere have tarried in for prolonged periods. They can more easily and quickly arrive at radical conclusions in theory, organization, and action, because they may be less impeded by traditional political formations and receive more assistance from principled revolutionaries.

The social and political stability of the most solid monopolist regime in the world can be upset once revulsion against the costly aggressions of the military machine, the irrepressible thrust of black Americans for emancipation, and the alienation of rebel youth from bourgeois society coalesce with the upsurge of a sizable segment of aroused industrial workers.

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Victory hinges upon a timely intermeshing of revolutionary openings with the right kind of leadership. The unfolding of the struggle for socialism cannot avoid being marked by pronounced irregularities because all the requirements for successful revolution on a national or international scale seldom come together simultaneously. The objective and subjective factors in the revolutionary process mature at different rates and in varying measures. This is especially true in the earlier stages of a revolutionary epoch when an ascending social force like the world working class must take its first experimental steps in

political organization, social reconstruction, and cultural renewal under the most difficult conditions.

The handicaps arising from the grave disproportions between the objective and subjective factors in the making of a revolution can be tackled from opposite ends. Fidel Castro has been foremost in emphasizing that a certain degree of immaturity in the objective conditions can be made good by the resolute action of politically enlightened, armed guerrillas who know how to weld unbreakable bonds first with the rural, then with the urban masses. Such a tactical line, as the Cuban Revolution has shown, may be suited to certain colonial countries where the tasks of the democratic revolution are unsolved and the regime is corrupt, hated, and without popular support.

However, the most constant and crucial contradiction in the world situation over the past fifty years has not arisen from immaturity in the objective conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule, but rather from the unreadiness or unwillingness of the leaderships of the workers' organizations to shoulder that task. Since 1918 the crises of the capitalist regime and the tensions of class conflict have created one prerevolutionary situation and revolutionary chance after another, which have been missed or ruined because of the opportunist character, treacherous role, or conciliatory policies of the old parties.

At the present point, two gigantic disproportions hang like leaden weights upon the progress of the world revolution. One is the perilous gap between the revolutionized but industrially backward East and the unrevolutionized but economically advanced West. The other is the urgent need of the workers and rural masses for correct guidance in their fight for power and the incapacity of the established leaderships to provide it.

These conditions define the historical function and set the supreme task of the Fourth International: to assemble and train a leadership that can close these gaps and assure definitive victory to the forces of socialism.

11. THE ROOTS OF BUREAUCRACY

AND WAYS TO FIGHT IT

By Fernand Charlier

On January 1, 1965, the head of government of a workers' state addressed the masses assembled to commemorate the taking of power. He warned them of the danger of bureaucratism and told them that a workers' state must defend itself against bureaucratism just as much as against imperialism. Fidel Castro, the main leader of a ruling party (at that time the United Party of the Socialist Revolution [Partido Unificado de la Revolución Socialista—PURS] and renamed the Communist Party of Cuba after the end of that year), proposed to the people gathered in Havana that the new year be called "The Year of Struggle Against Bureaucracy."

He was the first leader of a workers' state since the time of Lenin and Trotsky to express consciously and with such clarity the need to guard against the usurpation of power by a privileged caste. By the same token Fidel Castro paid implicit tribute to the Fourth International and its pioneers, who have upheld this concept since the birth in 1923 of the Moscow Opposition, the parent organization of the Trotskyist movement.

For, if the historic movement called "Trotskyism" is the authentic Marxism of our time, it is primarily because it is the only movement that provided a scientific explanation of the evolution of the Soviet Union and its bureaucratic degeneration and, later on, of the development of the other workers' states; and because, on the basis of this analysis, it is the only movement that has clearly formulated a program and policy for reestablishing workers' democracy and rule by the masses in these states.

I. The Problem of Bureaucracy in the Twentieth Century

Through historical materialism, Marxism explained the history of civilized societies by the struggles between classes and, more generally, between social groups with differing or antagonistic interests. In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx and Frederick

Engels established the scientific foundations of the struggle of the proletariat and its party against the bourgeois class and its state. The Marxism of the twentieth century is that Marxism which can explain the appearance, in countries where capitalism has been overthrown, of privileged social groupings which, unlike the bourgeoisie, have no roots in production — the bureaucracy of the workers' states.

The problem of bureaucracy did not originate with the appearance of the first workers' state in 1917. Bureaucracy does not exist solely in workers' states but is bound up with the existence of centralized states in general. Its first developments were recorded in slaveholding antiquity (e.g., the Roman Empire) and then under the medieval monarchy. With absolute monarchy it reached a "maturity" on which the capitalist mode of production would stamp several possible variants.

An attempt to weaken bureaucracy during the heyday of liberalism achieved real success only in the United States of the nineteenth century. The effort was not successful in Europe, where the strength of the state apparatus in France and England grew steadily, to say nothing of Germany. In the age of monopoly capitalism, and most notably of state monopoly capitalism, this attempt has been followed by a tendency toward bureaucratic hypertrophy.

I shall leave out of this survey bureaucracies of extinct socioeconomic formations: the "bureaucratic class" of the Asiatic socioeconomic structure in particular; the bureaucracies of antiquity and feudalism; the Church bureaucracy; and certain bureaucratic layers such as the *noblesse de robe* under absolute monarchy.

It is important to note, however, that bureaucracy is bound up with the existence of centralized states. On this question, at least, we find a point of agreement between Marxists and anarchists. The difference between them lies in their judgment as to the means by which to crush and eliminate this evil, not in their understanding of its general source.

In the socioeconomic formations of our time, we can distinguish four types of bureaucracy:

1) *Bureaucracy in the Advanced Capitalist Countries*

Here the bureaucracy first developed and proliferated in and around the state apparatus. Bureaucratic hypertrophy as a present-day socioeconomic phenomenon developed primarily in the period preceding World War I, with the coming of the highest stage of capitalism. Indeed, in his youthful works (*Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsrechts* — *The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy*

of the State), Marx had already been able to analyze the Prussian state bureaucracy which had certain points of resemblance to the bureaucracy of a capitalist state. In both instances, these were groups in the service of a ruling class, for whose benefit they administered the state apparatus and (in the imperialist epoch) enterprises. And Marx continued to uphold the basic tenets of his original analysis, as, for example, in his analyses of the bureaucracy under Napoleon III in *The Civil War in France*, where the bureaucracy is viewed as an instrument of the regime, along with the army, the police, etc.

With the advent of imperialism, however, the bureaucracy began to take on its essential characteristics and political significance as a stratum produced by the social division of labor in modern capitalist societies. But the bourgeoisie has never relinquished any essential portion of its power to these groups. Thus, this bureaucracy remains a functional bureaucracy. Only a fascist type of state can guarantee a high degree of autonomy to these strata, although, in the final analysis, their subordination to finance capital does not in any respect cease to exist.

2) *The State Bureaucracy in the Underdeveloped Countries*

In the underdeveloped countries, where the bourgeoisie is numerically weak and generally has less social weight, the bureaucracy serves as the seedbed for the developing national bourgeoisie.

In this instance, as in the first case, the bureaucracy serves the interests of the ruling class and promotes the development of capitalism of which it is itself a product. Its fate is bound up with that of capitalism. The methods of fighting it are the same as those employed in the struggle against capitalism.

3) *The Bureaucracy in the Workers' Movement*

In the workers' movement (parties, trade unions, and other workers' organizations), bureaucracy is produced by the existence of a permanent apparatus uncontrolled by the rank and file.

4) *The Bureaucracy in the Workers' States*

In contrast to the bureaucratic layers of the capitalist state, the bureaucracy in the workers' states, although dependent on the new economic and social bases of society, distorts and obstructs the development of the productive forces.

It does not constitute a new ruling class because a ruling class must be deeply rooted in the productive process. Every ruling class brings with it its own system of production and property forms. Therefore, the bureaucracy in the workers' states is not a class, even though, *in contradistinction* to the

bureaucratic layers of the capitalist state, it has achieved a certain autonomy which frees it from the control of the class that made the revolution—the proletariat. This bureaucracy then, is merely a reflection of the period of transition between two systems of ownership: capitalism and socialism.

Some single out the technocrats among the subgroups in the bureaucracy of workers' states and at times even counterpose them to the political bureaucracy (of the party or the state). However, the technocrats, and this is why they are only part of the bureaucracy, do not have their own apparatus, their own organization, or the power that enables the bureaucracy to run society in accordance with its general interests. Although the bureaucracy does not have its own ideology (because it is not a class), it nonetheless has a borrowed ideology. In the workers' states, this is the world outlook of the proletariat perverted into a dogma. But the technocrats have no dogma different from that of the bureaucracy. They share its general ideology, especially its opposition to "petty-bourgeois equalitarianism" (this is, in other words, their "ideological" defense of their privileges). Some have thought that the "de-Stalinization" of the Khrushchev period represented an assertion of the strength of the technocrats as against the "bureaucracy." I think it is much more correct to see in this aspect of "de-Stalinization" the granting of a role in making certain decisions to the bureaucracy's middle and even lower levels.

The bureaucracy of the workers' states, just like the layer of technocrats which is part of it, has a certain number of characteristics in common with the bureaucracy of the workers' movement.

In the transitional society, the bureaucracy is both the cause and the effect of a petty-bourgeois mentality. It is an effect inasmuch as the development of the productive forces has not yet been sufficient to eliminate the petty-bourgeois outlook which makes it possible for the bureaucracy to exist. It is a cause insofar as the bureaucracy engenders a conservative and petty-bourgeois mode of thought. This petty-bourgeois and hidebound mentality is the chief feature, aside from its material privileges, that the bureaucracy of the workers' states has in common with the bureaucracy of the workers' movement in the capitalist countries.

II. The Bureaucracy in the Workers' Movement

The problem of bureaucratism in the workers' movement

arose in conjunction with the development of substantial apparatuses of paid functionaries at the onset of the imperialist period. Seen in this light, *i.e.*, from the standpoint of the emergence of apparatuses, this type of bureaucracy originated as a by-product of the social division of labor in capitalist societies.

This social division of labor makes it incumbent on the workers' movement to create a full-time leadership, without which the general technical and cultural level of the workers' movement would fall below that of the bourgeoisie and all effective political struggle would be totally paralyzed.

At the dawn of the workers' movement (for example, at the time of the silkweavers of Lyons or the English Chartists) the requirements of leadership were primarily oratorical. However, along with the necessity for a functional bureaucracy at the service of the bourgeoisie and its state, the complexity of capitalist society itself made necessary an apparatus serving the proletariat and its party, an apparatus composed chiefly of leaders with a whole range of abilities. The very existence of this apparatus in turn *makes it possible for the phenomenon of bureaucratization to appear*. Nevertheless, this apparatus is necessary. Direct democracy of the "Athenian" type is out of the question in the conditions of modern capitalist society, and this holds true also for the workers' movement.

Eliminating the apparatus in order to remove the danger of bureaucracy, an idyllic solution periodically advocated by anarchistic or ultraleft groups, would only result in giving absolute predominance in the workers' movement to petty-bourgeois elements; it would give them the same cultural monopoly in the workers' movement which they enjoy in society at large, since they alone would have substantial time and opportunities to devote themselves to the general problems of the workers' movement. Otherwise, the workers' movement would degenerate into primitivism or, at best, trade-unionism, and could never forge the political consciousness which alone can open up the way to socialism. In either case, the desired objective, which is to struggle against conservatism (which is characteristic of bureaucratic apparatuses), would not be attained. Hence, there is a double necessity: the necessity for an apparatus on the one hand, and for a check on it on the other.

The apparatus must include within it, as professional revolutionaries, the best revolutionary workers—released from capitalist production—and the best socialist intellectuals—divorced from their class of origin. There is no "magic formula" to

assure the selective character of this recruitment. Even simple and correct rules, like limiting the wages of paid functionaries to those of an average worker, can turn into their opposite and lead to an "inverse" selection, with the most able socialist intellectuals going into better paid bourgeois employment. In his article, "Socialism and the Intellectuals," Leon Trotsky described the difficulties experienced by the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, the Marxist daily run by Mehring, in hiring an editor with university training and how it had to resort to running want ads in the papers for this purpose. In the last analysis, success or failure in choosing the staff of an apparatus will depend in very large measure on the sort of education the workers' party imparts to its members and periphery.

On the other hand, there must be a check on the apparatus. Only a thoroughgoing education of the members of the workers' party, qualifying them as the best of their class, a selected workers' vanguard able to keep a check on their own leadership in order to prevent it from becoming a bureaucracy, can block the establishment of "prescriptive rights" to the exercise of the leading functions (to use the expression employed by Robert Michels in his classic work *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der Modernen Demokratie*—*On the Sociology of Parties in Modern Democracy*) and the concentration of these functions in the hands of a few.

Without such measures, bureaucratization of the apparatus and the development of material privileges (giving up manual labor for the profession of full-time party worker, in itself equivalent to a rise in social position, already represents a special privilege harboring the germ of bureaucratism) will inevitably result in the organization's structural bureaucratization—a shifting of goals (the organization becoming an end instead of a means), a dialectic of partial conquests (with immediate aims becoming everything and the end goal disappearing into the mist of holiday orations), and conservatism, which is the general frame of mind in which this attitude is steeped. In *The New Course* (1923), Leon Trotsky showed how in the "classical" party of the Second International, the German social democracy, this conservative tradition was based on an adaptation to parliamentarianism and on the uninterrupted and semi-automatic growth of the organization, its press and, last but not least, its treasury.

The continual danger of traditionalist conservatism, which exists not only in bureaucratized organizations but makes itself felt in any mass party, can be combated and reduced to an

acceptable minimum through tactical initiative enabling the party to reorient itself rapidly in each new situation. But to be capable of this, socialist parties must not be mere mass parties embracing all within their ranks down to the last tavern-keeper, but must very carefully select their members and sympathizers according to activity-based criteria, following the example originally set by the Bolsheviks in 1903.

III. The Bureaucracy in the Workers' States

The problem of bureaucracy in workers' states is closely tied to that of bureaucracy in workers' organizations, even though *historically* at the time of the October Revolution the Bolshevik party was not a bureaucratized party. Indeed, working-class parties merely *reproduce* a number of the features of the modern state, of the modern bourgeois state, but also of the workers' states, inasmuch as by the definitions of Marx and Lenin every workers' state is to some extent a bourgeois state. Robert Michels in his work has noted this reflection of the characteristics of the modern state in political parties, concluding for his part, however, that the bureaucratization of both is inevitable.

Marxist theory, on the other hand, admits the possibility that the rule of any class, including the dictatorship of the proletariat, can take diverse *forms*, depending on a whole series of factors.

The Marxist theory of bureaucracy in workers' states can be summed up as follows:

a) Bureaucratic deformations are inescapable in workers' states because of the heritage from capitalism and the surrounding capitalist environment, the still deficient development of the productive forces in workers' states during the transitional period, and the inadequate cultural level of the working masses.

b) These deformations can be successfully combated, however, just as can the germs of bureaucratization within workers' parties operating in the capitalist countries.

c) The struggle against bureaucratic deformations has to be led by a vanguard party that must carefully preserve its separateness from the state apparatus.

d) Success in the party's struggle is dependent on a profound understanding of the objective and subjective factors which promote the growth of the bureaucratic cancer and on the formulation of a correct policy aimed at counteracting these factors.

e) This correct policy must center on developing the produc-

tive forces, advancing workers' democracy, and extending the proletarian revolution internationally.

1) *The Inevitability of Bureaucratic Deformations*

a. A Heritage of Capitalism. When a class takes power, a more or less restricted part of this class becomes the agent of this power. The exercise of power brings with it differentiation in the class. At the outset, this differentiation is only "functional." But in certain circumstances this function, as Rakovsky said in his letter, "The 'Professional Dangers' of Power," can bring about a transformation in the acting organ, whose members cease belonging to the class. No social class, indeed, has ever come to power fully experienced in the art of running a state. The taking of power poses a whole body of problems for which the class is not prepared. The education to enable the now dominant class to run the state, the economic organizations, the party, and the social organizations (trade unions and others), and to exercise a check over them is a rather long process.

Thus, the attitude typical of functionaries and bureaucratism cannot be eliminated *at one stroke* or completely. Furthermore, nationalization of the principal means of production makes still greater the weight and influence the bureaucracy can wield. For this reason, Marx, as early as in *The Civil War in France*, laid down a certain number of rules to prevent the growth of a bureaucratic stratum in proletarian states and to permit the future withering away of the state representing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Summing up the experience of the Paris Commune which had enabled Marx to establish these rules, Lenin said in *State and Revolution*:

"There can be no thought of abolishing the bureaucracy at once everywhere and completely. That is utopia. But to begin to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will permit to abolish gradually all bureaucracy—this is *not* utopia, this is the experience of the Commune, this is the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat" (in *Selected Works of Lenin in Two Volumes*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1959, p. 249).

The means to humble this bureaucracy left over from the capitalist regime were to be the measures outlined by Marx and called "infallible" by Engels in his introduction to *The*

Civil War in France: election and recall at any time of all manual and white-collar workers becoming functionaries; setting the salaries of functionaries on a par with the average worker's wage; the immediate adoption of measures enabling everyone to exercise functions of inspection and supervision and thus to be a "bureaucrat" for a time so that no one might become a "bureaucrat."

In *State and Revolution*, Lenin cited the example of the organization of the postal service:

"A witty German Social Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *postal service* an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At present the postal service is a business organized on the lines of a *state-capitalist* monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organizations of a similar type, in which, standing over the 'common' toilers who are overworked and starved, is the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. We have but to overthrow the capitalists, to crush the resistance of the exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, to smash the bureaucratic machine of the modern state—and freed from the 'parasite' we will have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves who will hire technicians, foremen and bookkeepers and pay them *all*, as indeed all state officials in general, a workman's wage. Here is a concrete, practical task, immediately possible of fulfillment in relation to all trusts, a task that will rid the toilers of exploitation and take account of what the Commune had already begun to practice (particularly in building up the state).

"To organize the *whole* economy on the lines of the postal service, so that the technicians, foremen, bookkeepers, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than a 'workman's wage,' all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. It is such a state, standing on such an economic foundation, that we need" (*Ibid.*, pp. 250-52).

The problem was to become infinitely more complicated, and the application of the "infallible measures" much more difficult, insofar as the revolution remained isolated in a country where the possibility of administering the productive forces as the postal service was remote.

b. *The Inadequate Development of the Productive Forces.* Inspired by Engels' conclusion to his introduction to the German

edition of Marx's *Class Struggles in France*, in which he compared the modern socialist movement to Christianity under the Roman Empire, Kautsky posed the question in his *Origins of Christianity* whether the socialist movement would face the same problems as the Christian religion after coming to power. His answer was No: that Christianity became a state religion (came to power) under conditions of a general decline in the level of the productive forces, but that the exact opposite would be true for socialism. The enormous advance of the productive forces would rule out a degenerative process. Kautsky, with the same outlook he demonstrated in several fields (centrism is characterized by optimistic determinism), saw the disappearance of bureaucracy as something predetermined. Parallel to the development of the productive forces under socialism, the bureaucracy would gradually lose all those characteristics making it a category set apart from the masses (in other respects he saw the bureaucracy as necessary for administration). Beyond this, Kautsky outlined no concrete measures.

But what neither Kautsky nor Lenin could foresee was that the revolution would remain confined to one backward country. The extremely low level attained by the productive forces, and the low cultural level of the masses bound up with it, was to make it much more difficult to overcome the bureaucratic danger than in the perspective originally projected by the Marxists, that is, coming to power in the most advanced countries.

Moreover, for Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the Russian Revolution's essential function was to assist in assuring the quickest possible victory of the revolution in the countries of western and central Europe. The isolation of a backward workers' state in the midst of a hostile capitalist environment posed the problem not only of bureaucratic survivals but of the development of new bureaucratic excrescences.

For the principal source of the bureaucratic phenomenon is a low material level and its consequences from the cultural standpoint.

Already in the Draft Program of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), written by Lenin for the Eighth Party Congress which was held March 18-23, 1919, the ruling party was forced to recognize the persistence of bureaucratic survivals. There it was stated that, despite the destruction of the bureaucracy's "fortresses," the struggle against the bureaucracy was "far from ended."

And in his speech on the party program at that congress,

Lenin was obliged to add that the mounting complaints about bureaucracy were well founded and that "complete and final victory in the fight against bureaucracy is only possible if the entire population takes part in running the country." For the soviets were still only the organs of a government "for the workers," which was run by the most advanced section of the proletariat at that stage.

From that point on, the expression "workers' state with bureaucratic deformations" appeared in the program. Although this term was not introduced without some qualms, its use indicated that the Bolsheviks were very conscious of the fact that in 1919 the Soviet state had become infected with bureaucratic gangrene, "this incontestably injurious deviation," as Trotsky was later to call it in *The New Course*.

In their work popularizing the 1919 program of the Russian Communist Party, *The ABC of Communism*, Bukharin and Preobrazhensky clearly elucidated the Bolshevik leadership's conception of the bureaucratic danger. They expressly explained that the object of setting up a new regime after the revolution of October 1917 had been "to substitute the masses themselves for the old bureaucracy," but that enormous difficulties were being encountered in realizing this goal. They cited, first of all, the inadequate education of the masses; secondly, their lack of experience in managerial tasks, the necessity of leaving the old bourgeois specialists in their positions, and the departure of the best militants for the Red Army. These obstacles, they pointed out, favored a "partial revival of bureaucracy under Soviet power."

To combat this revival they advocated participation by all workers and members of soviets in the work of running the country, the rotation of offices, and the progressive training of the entire working population without exception in the tasks of administering the state.

These formulas, taken from the party program and employed by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in *The ABC of Communism*, in essence merely made explicit the prescriptions of *State and Revolution*, i.e., the measures adopted by the Paris Commune. The failure to apply them was to assure the hegemony of the apparatus and give it the opportunity to usurp power from the working masses.

c. *The Isolation of the Revolution*. These formulas indicate that, while Bukharin and Preobrazhensky understood the causes and the extent of the bureaucratic sickness, they expected no miracles from the remedies to be applied. What the Bolshevik

leadership aimed for essentially was to "hold out," keeping the inevitable bureaucratic deformation to a minimum until another victorious socialist revolution could relieve them; because the isolation of the revolution promoted the development of bureaucratism and the ending of that isolation would nip bureaucratism in the bud.

Two years later, at the time of the Tenth Party Congress, where the debate was again closely tied in with the analysis of the bureaucracy, the danger appeared "clearer, more distinct, more menacing," as Lenin put it in his pamphlet, *The Tax in Kind*. The revolutionary wave that followed the first imperialist world war had temporarily ebbed, forcing the Bolsheviks and the International (which was then about to hold its Third Congress) to change their policy. They had now to insure the longest possible survival of the dictatorship of the proletariat by combating, under conditions of isolation, the increasingly serious manifestations of bureaucratism and to speed by a tactical readjustment the victory of socialism in the West, which had been temporarily delayed.

2) *The Economic Roots of Bureaucratism*

The basic source of the great danger of bureaucratism in workers' states lies then in the objective conditions of backwardness which favor the institutionalizing not of "office workers' bad habits," to which simplistic and Stalinist definitions later reduced it, but of a "definite system of administration of men and things" (Trotsky, *The New Course*). In transitional states, therefore, the phenomenon of bureaucracy is much more than a political manifestation: it is a phenomenon of social and economic origin, which is, in the last analysis, rooted in material and cultural conditions.

The source of this bureaucracy does not lie in the need for a bureaucratic apparatus, as it does for the bourgeoisie in connection with the development of the bourgeois state machinery, but rather in "the atomized and dispersed character of small production, its poverty, lack of culture, the absence of roads, illiteracy, absence of exchange between agriculture and industry, the absence of connection and interaction between them," as Lenin put it in his previously cited work, *The Tax in Kind*.

The bureaucracy's power derives from the contradictions existing between the city and the country, the proletariat and the peasantry, the national republics and the Soviet Union, among the layers within the peasantry and the various strata in the

working class, consumer groups, and from the contradiction between the state itself and its imperialist encirclement. In this way a caste is installed which in practice commands the surplus social product and jealously defends its right to dispose of this surplus product and to control the nationalized means of production for this purpose. Such is the fundamental source, the economic origin, of the bureaucracy, which is "*a superstructure based on the dispersion and demoralization of the small producer*"; it is produced by the need for a state apparatus unifying the interests of these heterogeneous strata of a society very far removed from economic harmony.

However, it is by no means inevitable that bureaucratic deformations will lead to the bureaucracy's domination over the working class and the party. Of course, certain currents in the workers' movement see bureaucracy as a necessity produced by the requirements of industrialization in backward countries. Marx, they say, envisaged the revolutionary transformation of advanced countries, while the revolutions which have occurred until now have been in "backward" countries like Russia, or even "colonial" ones. From this they draw the erroneous conclusion that, since the consciousness of the revolutionary movement is more "advanced" than the economy of the country, the proletariat must give itself the "economy of its ideology" and for this dictatorship of the "vanguard" over the masses is necessary.

This conception is based on the view that there is a conflict between the immediate interests of the workers and the necessary intensification of production and that, therefore, the "spontaneity" of the masses cannot serve to lead the way and a bureaucracy is a "necessity." This is the "objectivist" conception of the bureaucracy as it is found in certain of Bettelheim's writings after the second world war and in certain writings of Isaac Deutscher during the Stalin period and the first part of the Khrushchev era.

In reality, things are far from that simple. For example, there is a need not only to intensify labor but to improve labor productivity sufficiently to bring about an improvement in the lot of the masses. Far from insuring this improvement, the bureaucracy obstructs it by appropriating an important part of the aggregate surplus product of transitional societies.

But it is nonetheless true that at times there may be a combination of circumstances where the need to intensify labor appears as a necessity which is opposed to the immediate interests of the workers. We will see an example of this further on in discussing the wrong solutions which the "Workers' Opposi-

tion" proposed in 1920-21 in the face of the bureaucratic danger. For the present it need only be noted that, according to the Marxist, *i.e.*, Trotskyist, understanding of bureaucracy, the greatest difficulties are not insurmountable. This is where the role that the revolutionary party can and must play comes in.

3) *The Party's Role in the Struggle Against Bureaucracy*

The possibility of waging an effective struggle against bureaucratic deformations in a workers' state (and afterwards, if need be, against the bureaucracy as a power-usurping caste) depends on having a means of struggle—on the subjective factor, the party. While objective conditions, indeed, make inevitable the existence of certain bureaucratic deformations in the state, the party for its part can remain exempt from them.

Of course, the party cannot tear itself free from the social and cultural context of the country. But it is a *voluntary vanguard organization*, a "free association of revolutionists," as Fidel Castro said in his speech of March 26, 1962, against Escalante. To the degree that it is such an organization, the party can safeguard itself against bureaucratism much more than can the state, just as before the revolution it could guard itself against bourgeois ideology. One can understand, then, the meaning of the cry of alarm Fidel Castro raised in this speech when he saw that "We were organizing or creating or making a straitjacket, a yoke, *compañeros*. We were not furthering a free association of revolutionists; rather we were forming an army of tamed and submissive revolutionists."

For the party to play its antibureaucratic role it must remain separate from the state apparatus; because fusing the party apparatus with the machinery of state administration places the party in the midst of bureaucratic corruption instead of, on the contrary, enabling it to fight it.

In other words, as Trotsky said in *The New Course*, "the source of bureaucratism resides in the growing concentration of the attention and the forces of the party upon the governmental institutions and apparatuses . . ." That is why "the whole question is to realize this leadership without merging into the bureaucratic apparatus of the state, in order not to expose itself to a bureaucratic degeneration." This conclusion, which Trotsky arrived at in 1923, was recently rediscovered by Fidel Castro; in this same March 1962 speech he opposed merging "the functions of this organization [the party] with those of the state administrative apparatus." This shows to what extent even

today *The New Course* remains the preeminent statement of principles on the role of the revolutionary party in the struggle against bureaucratic deformations.

IV. Party Policy for Restricting and Combating Bureaucratic Deformations in Transitional States

On the basis of a clear understanding of the causes of bureaucratism, the policy of a revolutionary party must be formulated in such a way as to promote the optimum development of the productive forces, to develop the maximum workers' democracy, and to impel the revolution forward on a world scale.

1) The Soviet Experience

It was on such a basis that the Left Opposition conducted the struggle inside the Bolshevik Party from 1923 to 1928 for industrialization in the USSR, for workers' democracy, and for a correct line internationally (the Chinese question, the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee, etc.).

Certain other tendencies besides the Moscow Opposition, which emerged in 1923, had previously attempted to formulate a program against the bureaucratic danger. In 1920-21, succeeding the so-called Left Communist group (1918) and the Democratic Centralist tendency (1919), the Workers' Opposition, led by Alexandra Kollontai (the former People's Commissar of social welfare) and Shliapnikov, opposed the Bolshevik Party. Inasmuch as leaderships like the Yugoslav (as well as some ultraleft groups) have in the recent past disinterested these analyses, a word must be said about them.

The program of the Workers' Opposition started from the premise that there was a danger that former bourgeois elements, retailers, and small property owners would exert an influence on the vanguard party through "the representatives of the rich bourgeoisie in the person of the specialists, technicians, engineers and former managers of industrial and financial concerns." They denounced concessions to specialists of bourgeois origin and the rejection of the principle of "collective management" (by the Ninth Bolshevik Party Congress in April 1920) as an "adaptation" to a "product of the individualist conception of the bourgeois class," whose originators supposedly warmly applauded the centralist tendencies of the Soviet government of the time.

As far as this opposition was concerned, the factional struggle in the Bolshevik Party at the time was reduced to the simple formula: "Who is right? the leaders? or the working masses with their healthy class instinct?" The Workers' Opposition replied that the workers must be "given complete freedom to experiment, to adapt, and to discover new ways of producing, to organize vocational training on a class basis, to express and develop their creative potential." The fundamental point of these theses was that "organizing social control of the economy is the prerogative of an all-Russian congress of the producers, who, united in their trade unions, would elect the central body governing the entire economic life of the republic."

Thus in the conception of the Workers' Opposition there was a complete antithesis between what they called centralized bureaucracy and the creative potential of the working masses. However, in January 1920 the number of factory workers had fallen to 50 per cent of the total in January 1917, and the majority of the revolutionary workers were no longer at their jobs in the half-empty factories. Bureaucracy was defined in rather superficial terms, going no deeper than the external manifestations: "The harm bureaucracy does rests chiefly in its manner of resolving problems: not through a free exchange of opinions or through the efforts of those involved but by formal decisions made in central institutions by one person or a small number of persons and transmitted in finished form to the ranks, while those directly concerned are often not allowed to play any part. A third party decides your fate: That is the essence of bureaucracy." To assure the party's regeneration, they called for the "expulsion of all nonproletarian elements" (all these quotations are taken from A. Kollontai's *The Workers' Opposition*, written early in 1921).

The Workers' Opposition was in fact a syndicalist tendency whose program could not have prevented bureaucratization. It would have promoted the formation of a bureaucracy based on the upper strata of the proletariat. It did not answer the concrete problems brought on by the inability of an exhausted and diminished proletariat—whose immediate demands, moreover, it declared had to be satisfied—to carry on the administration of the economy.

This shows that an antibureaucratic program must take a number of factors into account in order to permit the development of forms of workers' dissent side by side with the advancement of the productive forces. The two tendencies opposed to Kollontai's faction had a better understanding of these prob-

lems; although, in immediate practice, Lenin's positions, which were backed by the majority, served to put off the question of workers' management to a future occasion that would never come.

In essence, the Workers' Opposition rejected the role of the party, failing to see that if, up until 1921, the workers' state had successfully forestalled the qualitative transformation of bureaucratic deformations into bureaucratic degeneration, this was solely owing to the dictatorship of the old guard of the Bolshevik Party, which was exercised over the working class as well.

Nonetheless, in the preliminary draft resolution on party unity which he presented to the Tenth Congress, Lenin did not hesitate to say that any constructive proposals whatever among the points of special concern to the Workers' Opposition group—expulsion from the party of "doubtful" and nonproletarian elements, combating bureaucracy, the development of workers' democracy and initiative, etc.—should be examined with the greatest care and tested in practical work.

By September 1921, Lenin had already stated that the new NEP period was bringing with it dangers which had to be counteracted by ridding the party of bureaucratized Communists. Concretely, he told the Second Congress of the Political Education Services of Russia that he fervently hoped 100,000 to 200,000 Communists would be expelled from the party. And in March 1922 he raised the same question by proposing, in opposition to Zinoviev, to lengthen the period of candidacy for party membership of all applicants who had worked less than ten years in a factory.

In reality, however, the number of party members tripled indiscriminately after 1922, and by 1932 it had quadrupled; this reversal of the party's selective methods of recruitment eliminated all the essential vanguard characteristics which had marked the Bolshevik Party.

This change could only come about in the context of the passivity of the workers, the apathy of the broad masses, and the exhaustion of the revolution. Thus, the failure to extend world revolution led finally to the victory of the bureaucracy. But there was nothing inevitable about the bureaucratic phenomenon; this defeat was not predestined. This current could have been reversed internationally by victories of those sections of the working class which went into motion after the defeat of the German revolution, from 1925 (England) to 1936 (Spain and France). This shows that the Stalinist bureaucracy was

both the cause and the effect of the setbacks of the revolution. But it also demonstrates that a policy whose purpose is to limit the effects and the spread of the bureaucracy must be based on extending the world revolution, as well as on domestic measures to limit these deformations as much as possible. These two policies converge at a certain point. And the platform of the Trotsky-Zinoviev Left Opposition (1927) enables us to understand the close link between party democracy and the formulation of a correct policy.

2) Later Contributions

Moreover, the experience of the revolutions that developed independently of Stalinism after the second world war has considerably enriched the fund of Marxist experience and theory of struggle against bureaucratic deformations.

The Yugoslav self-management experiment came first in this respect. Even though it has been a limited one for a number of reasons (basically, its extreme decentralization, the market-economy context in which the plants function, and the fact that workers' self-management does not extend to the political plane), it represents a highly valuable acquisition of the workers' and international revolutionary movement.

The Yugoslav leadership was the first since the Stalinist usurpation to understand the essence of bureaucracy and to warn against the threat of "seeing the top stratum, which exercises the governmental functions, free itself from all control, and the additional threat of seeing the bureaucratization of the political vanguard which has begun to identify itself with the state apparatus" (as the July 1967 resolution of the Central Committee of the League of Yugoslav Communists put it).

It also understood that the problem of the social and economic causes of bureaucracy is a material one (while the Chinese leadership, although it has now, "in its own way," accepted the idea that degeneration is possible, holds that these causes are fundamentally "ideological," thereby falling into philosophical idealism); thus the Yugoslav leadership regards self-management as a form of social control which is to make impossible all arbitrariness and waste of social funds (the Ljubljana Program of 1958). But its understanding has remained limited by the fact that it sees bureaucratism almost exclusively in the guise of "interference" from the "central" state authorities.

Most important in this matter are the Cubans, who have

recently formulated (see the four editorials of March 1967 in *Granma*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party) very advanced conceptions in regard to the struggle against bureaucracy, which they consider a "vital task." The Cuban leadership sees this as a long and complex struggle because it is not enough to combat merely the quantitative aspects of this evil (the number of functionaries), but bureaucracy must be completely rooted out. It considers bureaucracy a "leftover from the past." Agreeing with Christian Rakovsky's analysis, the Cubans define it as a functional bureaucracy (an intermediary which the ruling class entrusts with the conduct of state affairs and the work of administering the plants) that is capable of establishing itself as a separate and uncontrolled social stratum and from which the workers' state can be freed.

Although the Cubans have not yet found the proper forms to institutionalize workers' democracy, they correctly define the party's role in the struggle against bureaucracy as fundamental. And, in a profound revolutionary-humanist spirit, as an undertaking which need not be put off until the achievement of abundance but which must be begun right now, they set themselves the task of creating a new man, with a new consciousness and a new attitude toward life. They rightly call this form of combating the bureaucratic danger "antibureaucratic revolution," and its keystone is raising the consciousness of all the people.

V. The Struggle Against the Bureaucracy's Political Power and Its Overthrow

1) *The Context of the Problem*

The form that the "antibureaucratic revolution" advocated by the Cubans must inevitably take will be different in those workers' states profoundly undermined by bureaucracy, where the bureaucracy has definitively established itself as the arbiter in distribution. That is, where it has established itself as the arbiter in conflicts between primitive socialist accumulation and the beginning of socialist accumulation on the one hand, and consumption by the masses, on the other; and where it has achieved a total monopoly of political power. There the "antibureaucratic revolution" can successfully assert itself only through an all-out struggle against a bureaucracy totally divorced from the masses, whose exclusive caste character makes it terrified of any revolutionary change and determined to

maintain the *status quo* at any cost in order to preserve its privileged position as a social parasite.

Naturally, such a bureaucracy, although it has grown very large numerically (Trotsky estimated it at about five or six million in *The Revolution Betrayed*, and it can be estimated at about double that in the USSR today), is not homogeneous. On the contrary, it is still less homogeneous than the proletariat or the peasantry. But it remains united in its social conservatism and—although at the decisive moment certain sectors may definitively choose the camp of the workers—it must be overthrown through a political revolution.

2) *Trotsky's Position*

Some time was required for the bureaucracy to institutionalize its privileges and political power. Each separate phase of the evolution of Stalinism was chronicled step by step by the Left Opposition and later by the movement for a new international; at every stage the tasks of the struggle were reformulated in the light of the new developments.

a. *Peaceful Reform of the Party.* In the initial period (until 1933), Trotsky based himself on the vitality of the Soviet regime and remained convinced of the possibility of internal reform of the party and the state.

b. *Toward a New Party.* After 1933, Trotsky came to the conclusion that a new party had become necessary, since the Soviet Communist Party had lost all the characteristics of a vanguard party. Likewise, the regime could no longer be reformed by purely constitutional means and limited violence—though not to the extent of a civil war—to dislodge the bureaucracy had to be envisaged.

c. *The Need for a Political Revolution.* It was only in 1935 that Trotsky reached the conclusion that a political revolution, and not simply corrective administrative measures against the bureaucracy would be necessary. But Marxist theory recognizes also that bureaucratic degeneration is not sufficient grounds for repudiating the characterization of the noncapitalist countries as workers' states. Consequently, what is necessary is a political revolution that would not challenge the foundations of the new mode of production but would bring about a change in the regime, like the French revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

3) *The Program of the Political Revolution*

The program of the political revolution must necessarily

comprise immediate demands (for an improved standard of living for the masses, against bureaucratic laws regarding the family, for the workers' freedom of movement), a platform of transitional demands (to carry the masses over from the struggle for immediate demands to contesting the power of the bureaucracy), and a maximum program concerned with the future organization of the workers' state freed from the bureaucratic caste.

The components of the transitional program for the political revolution, which are outlined in the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, received their first confirmation in the revolutionary mass movements arising in the workers' states after the death of Stalin. The revolutionary days that shook the world in June 1953 in Berlin, and in October and November 1956 in Poland and Hungary—despite their unsuccessful outcome because of the lack of a revolutionary party—prefigured the course the workers' struggle will inevitably take, proceeding from elementary struggle for a better life through mass actions of an ever broader scope to political revolution.

Neither the East German proletariat nor the Polish and Hungarian workers had any thought of returning their factories to the former owners. On the contrary, while struggling to eliminate the bureaucratic yoke, they were determined to defend these factories against any attempt to restore the old productive relations. The slogans of the Hungarian workers' councils were extremely clear in this respect: The unions demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops—which represented military control by the Soviet bureaucracy, the institutionalization of the workers' councils with the right of supervision over planning, the right to strike, and trade-union independence. The Budapest central workers' council called for recognition of parties basing themselves on socialism.

It is clear, in fact, that nonbureaucratic workers' states must accept both a plurality of socialist parties and the independence of trade unions (which Trotsky advocated in *The Revolution Betrayed*, correcting his error in the 1920-21 trade-union discussions when he failed to take into account the workers' need for independent organizations to defend their interests as consumers).

By forcing the revolutionary party to use persuasion instead of repression to retain the support of the majority of the workers organized in workers' councils, a multi-party system remains unquestionably the sole guarantee of the party's preserving itself from identification with the state. On this point, also,

Trotsky had to repudiate some concepts he had previously defended, for example, his advocacy of a one-party system in *Terrorism and Communism*. This concept was based on the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat presupposed a unity of will of the proletariat and, consequently, the rule of a single party within the proletariat itself. The measures the Bolsheviks were forced to take at one time or another in the course of the civil war (the work cited was written at the height of the civil war, on a military train) could by no means be elevated to political theory.

In a whole series of workers' states, vanguard worker-militants have already taken on the job of formulating a program for political revolution. In Poland, for example, the opposition, through Kuron and Modzelewski in their *Open Letter to the Members of the University of Warsaw Section of the United Polish Workers Party and the Union of Young Communists*, has demanded the formation of workers' councils headed by a "central council of delegates," the arming of the workers in militias under the authority of these councils, a plurality of parties, trade-union independence, and democratic reform in planning.*

In other countries, the first moves, modest to be sure but full of revolutionary content, have been made to alert the workers to these questions. They have already gained a response. It is along this line that the construction of a party that will lead the bureaucratized workers' states to an antibureaucratic revolution, a "revolution within the revolution," must be begun.

* Kuron and Modzelewski's *Open Letter* is included in *Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out 1964-1968*, Merit Publishers, New York, 1968.

12. ECONOMICS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

By Ernest Mandel

Aside from a few general remarks scattered through *The German Ideology*, *Capital*, *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, and their correspondence, Marx and Engels did not develop any systematic views on the organization of the economy immediately following the overthrow of capitalism. This was not an accidental omission but a deliberate abstention. The founders of historical materialism believed that it was not their task to formulate a ready-made schema of the future society because that society could only be the concrete result of the conditions in which it would appear.¹

Although Marx and Engels' attitude is understandable, one cannot help regretting it. For well-known reasons the overthrow of capitalism began in countries of a relatively backward industrial and capitalist development, while Marx predicted that the transition to socialism would result from the most advanced capitalist development, and in several key countries at once. Under these special conditions, the coming of a new society has replaced one conflict with another. It has substituted for the conflict between capitalist production relations and the productive forces, whose expansion they impede, a conflict between a more advanced mode of production and a development of the productive forces not yet corresponding to the needs of this progressive economic base. Instead of concentrating on a process of creating new productive relations and new norms of distribution, the leaders of the transitional societies have had to concentrate their efforts on expanding the productive forces themselves. The bureaucratic deformation and degeneration of the transitional society, resulting from the isolation of the revolution in one or several relatively backward countries, have already aggravated these new contradictions which Marx could only dimly perceive.²

According to the method Marx applied to the study of the capitalist mode of production, a systematic analysis of the general characteristics of the transitional period would be possible only with the appearance of this economy in its already mature and stabilized form.³ It is unlikely that future history

will consider the present economy of the USSR as this form—not to mention the other countries with a socialist economic base. It seems indeed possible to draw some economic conclusions from the already rich and varied experiences of all these countries. However, to systematize these experiences in the form of a general economic theory of the transitional period seems premature, if not impossible, both because of the absence of more mature forms of this economy and the difficulty of separating out what is peculiar to the *specific context* of its emergence in a backward environment from what corresponds to its *deeper historical nature*.

Any attempt to formulate an economic theory of the capitalist mode of production on the basis of the English and Dutch manufactures of the seventeenth century was likewise doomed to certain failure. The misfortunes of the Physiocrats who sought to formulate a general economic theory based on the reality of a still essentially agricultural France are well known, even though this agriculture served as the basis for an already advanced manufacturing, commercial, and financial capitalism.

But in the absence of a general economic theory of the transitional period—until such time as the overthrow of capitalism in several industrially advanced countries makes it possible to observe the functioning of an economy of this social type which has been freed from the necessity of carrying out primitive socialist accumulation⁴—a more systematic analysis of the principal experiences of economic construction in the noncapitalist countries is useful and necessary. It is useful because it helps to orient politically the revolutionary forces which are already confronted with comparable phenomena, or will be tomorrow. It is necessary because it enables us to make a Marxist critique of this new chapter in economic history untrammelled by conjunctural aspects and factional polemics.

A certain number of objective problems and key options can be formulated which define to a very large extent the economic and social dynamic of the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism in the less developed countries.

1. Socialism in One Country or Permanent Revolution

The first objective problem was the crucial historical dilemma confronting the Bolsheviks after the recession—which began either in 1921 or 1923—of the first international revolutionary wave. The alternative before them must be correctly formulated because Stalinist falsification has created a great deal of con-

fusion, extending to apparently bitter anti-Stalinists, in this regard.

Of course, there have always been ultraleft variants of fatalism, of mechanistic economic determinism of Kautskyist origin, for which the recession if not defeat of the world revolution inevitably meant a return to capitalism (private capitalism or state capitalism) in Soviet Russia.⁵

In their eyes the impossibility of *completing* the construction of socialism in one country became an impossibility to *begin* it. The holders of this theory have not distinguished themselves since that time by any special capacity to explain satisfactorily the dynamic and contradictions peculiar to the Soviet economy (which they seek vainly to reduce to the basic contradictions of the capitalist mode of production) or, above all, to integrate this analysis in an overall view of the worldwide class struggle. If one starts from the absurd premise that the victory of the Chinese Revolution was a victory for capitalism (!) or that the Vietnam war is a "conflict among imperialist powers," it is difficult to comprehend what has been happening in the world for twenty years.

At no time did the Left Opposition in the CPSU, to say nothing of the International Left Opposition or the world Trotskyist movement that issued from it, share this simplistic view. For them the struggle against the myth of the possibility of completing the construction of a socialist economy in one country was precisely a struggle against all fatalistic and mechanistic distortions of Marxism. They understood that ultimately it was the struggle of antagonistic social forces that would decide the problems posed by the isolation of the first workers' state. For this reason, the very people who opposed the Stalinist myth of "socialism in one country" were the first to advance an economic program of accelerated industrialization and progressive collectivization of the Soviet economy.⁶

There was no contradiction between their struggle to keep the Soviet state and the Communist International from impeding the progress of the world revolution—by incorrect tactical advice, wrong strategies, or the inadmissible subordination of the policies of the Communist parties to the changing needs of Soviet diplomacy—and their resolute desire to *begin* building a socialist economy in the USSR. On the contrary, these were only two aspects of the same basic strategy. Understanding that a conflict was inevitable between the socialist and capitalist forces both within the Soviet Union and abroad, the Left Opposition sought to create conditions as favorable as possible for this struggle by increasing the specific

weight of the proletarian forces inside the USSR and internationally.

The verdict of history has proved them right. The thesis that maneuvering among the classes can enduringly avert the outbreak of the inevitable struggle between antagonistic social forces has not been corroborated by experience. Both the conflict with the kulaks and with imperialism were unavoidable. All that the Stalin faction's eclectic and shortsighted policy did was to create the conditions in which these conflicts could erupt by surprise, where the warnings of those predicting them would not be heard, and where measures aimed at gaining the best strategic positions for engaging in them were not taken in time.⁷

Historically, the problems of building socialism will be solved only by world revolution. It is only in this context that the disproportions, the distortions, and the most extreme contradictions will be definitively overcome. However, while awaiting the victory of this revolution—which the victorious proletariat has every interest in hastening by all means truly conducive to this end—the isolated workers' state or group of workers' states cannot be content to manage its current economic affairs in a makeshift fashion in anticipation of a change in the international situation. It must undertake the task of socialist construction, if only because this is the only way to reduce the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces within its own society.

The answer that the theory of the permanent revolution provides for the question of what must be done in the event of an isolated victory of the socialist revolution in one or a small group of backward countries is therefore a combination of several elements. Its three primary components are: promote the extension of the world revolution, begin building a socialist economy, and develop socialist democracy.

2. The Survival and Disappearance of Market Categories

Immediately following the victory of the October Revolution, and especially in the period of War Communism, the Communist theoreticians saw the construction of a socialist economy primarily in terms of an immediate and general disappearance of the market and monetary economy. In Germany, various economists upheld analogous positions in the debates on how to carry out a socialization of the economy which were coincident with the initial phases of the German revolution (above all the establishment of the Soviet Republic of Bavaria).⁸

However, the theoretical consensus changed with the beginning of the New Economic Policy (NEP), less with the aim of justifying the tactical turn than out of a better understanding of reality and a return to the Marxist tradition in this regard.⁹ It appeared that particularly in the relations between agriculture (essentially private or cooperative) and industry, as well as between the workers and the state, maintaining money and market relationships was best suited to maximizing economic growth and to the best defense of the interests of the workers as consumers.

The objective sources and theoretical explanation of these immediate lessons of experience were not clearly perceived by the participants in the Soviet economic debates of the nineteen-twenties. After the definitive victory of the Stalin faction, objective theoretical study was in every respect replaced by an apologetic pragmatism totally devoid of scientific value. It was thus that the well-known Stalinist formulas were arrived at that the law of value is an "inexorable objective law of socialist society" and that it remains valid as a result of the existence of "two different property forms: nationalized property and group property." It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that these explanations have little in common with Marxist theory.¹⁰

Today we are better able to understand that the survival of the market categories in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism is primarily due to the inadequate development of the productive forces, which does not permit a physical distribution of all the goods produced according to the amount of labor furnished by each producer. The inadequate supply of use values keeps exchange value alive, inasmuch as it forces every producer to retain the private ownership of his labor-power and exchange it for a wage which constitutes a certificate for the appropriation of a strictly limited but *undifferentiated fraction* of the whole of the mass of goods and services produced by society. Eliminating the commodity character of consumer goods would mean a replacement of this wage by precisely *limited physical rations*. This would inevitably lead to a revival of exchange (first of the products themselves then of the ration vouchers), because they would not fully cover the needs and because these needs differ in intensity for different individuals. In these conditions, maintaining the monetary standard permits the use of a tool of accounting and distribution which is at once more flexible, more equitable, and more inclined to respect autonomous decisions by the workers in the field of consumption.¹¹

If real market relationships, based on a real exchange involving a change in ownership, thus govern the reproduction of labor-power in the sphere of consumption,¹² the use of monetary standards in the relations among publicly owned enterprises only assumes a market *form* without implying real market relationships. Since the production cost and sale price of consumer goods are calculated in money, it is simpler to make the same calculations for producer goods as well. The production costs of these goods could obviously be calculated in man-hours, and conversion tables between these man-hours and the monetary standard could be used to evaluate the *input* of raw materials and machinery in the cost of producing consumer goods. However, this method unnecessarily complicates accounting operations without in any way altering the reality of the production process or the circulation of the means of production and consumption in the country.

The survival of market and monetary categories thus proves inevitable during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. But their survival entails a series of economic and social consequences which enter into contradiction with the imperatives of a society building socialism. Further on I shall examine the importance for social planning of this survival. At this point let me mention the most important social aspects. The survival of money and market economy maintains the old forms of alienation and causes new forms to arise besides.¹³ Market and money relations are one of the main sources of the danger of bureaucratization of the state and society. Being kept in the very center of day-to-day life, the penchant for defending *private interests* encourages also the persistence and resurgence of a tendency towards private *enrichment*, etc., etc.

It is mechanistic, nondialectical reasoning to assert that, since the survival of market categories is due in the last analysis to inadequate development of the productive forces, the latter must first be developed to the maximum—even by encouraging nonsocialist motives—in order later, once there is abundance, to open up a general assault on individual selfishness. It is impossible to separate in this way economic and social processes which must be *combined* in order to produce a genuinely socialist society. I will not stop here to discuss the by no means proved assumption that "material incentives" and the "market mechanisms" alone make possible a maximization of production and growth. It must, however, be stressed that there is no reason to anticipate that development of the productive forces will automatically facilitate the struggle against individual selfishness. To the contrary, it is more log-

ical to suppose that basing economic management on private interest for decades will create a whole lopsided pattern of social behavior that will be hardened when a higher level of productive development is reached. The economic and social experience of the USSR, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia over the past fifteen years confirms this assumption.

Marxist dialectics therefore requires that an economic policy which would not concede too much to shortsighted pragmatism ought continually to combine a tendency to retain the market categories as long as they are necessary with one of encouraging their disappearance as much as possible. The disappearance of these categories must not be conceived of as the result of a "single act" of society but as a progressive *tendency*, which must begin very early and then expand as the material and intellectual resources increase. I have analyzed elsewhere the economic conditions which make possible this process of the withering away of the market categories.¹⁴ It goes without saying that this process is guided by the selection of priorities (needs met by society without regard to individual effort or productivity), and this selection must be made democratically by the mass of the working population.

It is only by thus combining the use of the market categories with the promotion of their disappearance that the dialectics of ends and means is effectively implemented. In this way the *practical habit* of socialist relationships—without which the creation of a new society appears as utopia—is gradually produced.

3. Socialist Planning and the Law of Value

"Indeed *no form* of society can prevent the working time at the disposal of society from regulating production one way or another. So long, however, as this regulation is accomplished not by the direct and conscious control of society over its working time—which is possible only with common ownership—but by the movement of commodity prices, things remain as you have already quite aptly described them in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* . . ." Marx wrote to Engels on January 8, 1868.¹⁵ This in brief is the fundamental contradiction between an economy governed by a conscious plan and an economy governed by the law of value.

An economy *governed* by the law of value is an economy in which production, and therefore investment, is guided by *effective demand*. What operates here primarily is not so much the difference in the intensity of different needs of different indi-

viduals; what is decisive is the difference in incomes. Thus production is directed toward satisfying the needs of the privileged layers first. Production of luxury items is stimulated before the elementary needs of the mass of the population are met. The rents for modern housing are left to the "law of the market" so that it is accessible only to the highest income strata. Since it is "unprofitable" according to the laws of the market which are operative at the *level of isolated enterprises*, social consumption (education, health, certain public services) is systematically sacrificed to more highly "profitable" individual consumption. For individual consumption is in the form of commodities produced to be sold at a profit. It is obvious that an economy *ruled* in this way moves away from socialism rather than towards it, even if this would make it possible to increase the economy's rate of growth. The logic of such an evolution involves investment decisions being made more and more at the level of the individual enterprises. Production governed by the laws of the market accompanied by decentralization in investment progressively reproduces the characteristic economic fluctuations of the capitalist economy, with phases of overinvestment followed by phases of underinvestment, periodic unemployment, overproduction, etc., etc.

An economy governed by a plan implies, on the contrary, that society's relatively scarce resources are not apportioned blindly ("behind the backs of the producer-consumers") by the play of the law of value but that they are consciously allocated according to previously established priorities. In a transitional economy where socialist democracy prevails, the mass of the working people democratically determines this choice of priorities. Such deliberate selection of priorities is the only way to *start* the process of eliminating the proletarian condition and the alienation of the workers. This process is unrealizable both under the rule of an omnipotent and despotic bureaucracy, as in the Stalinist USSR, and under the rule of a more and more predominant market, as in Yugoslavia. A combination of bureaucratic despotism and the anarchy of the market cannot in any respect be considered a valid alternative solution.

A deliberate and conscious choice of priorities does not mean that economic accounting is "ignored" or "despised." It means only that (1) this accounting is made in scientifically established production costs and not in sale prices; (2) these costs are integrated in an overall scheme of economic relations where no element is omitted;¹⁶ (3) they not automatically guide investments.

Strictly speaking, costs could determine investment choices only in the case of "all other things being equal," to use the formula of the neoclassical economists, which almost never happens.

In reality, far from promoting "economic rationality," this confusion between the "law of value" and "economic cost calculation"—which leads to the absurd postulation of a "socialist market economy" that is currently in vogue in East Europe and the USSR¹⁷—steers further and further away from it and tends to combine the evils of the market economy with those of bureaucratic arbitrariness. No economy with a socialist base can tolerate a *total* reign of the law of value. Everywhere, and even in Yugoslavia, governments continue to dictate prices or more or less decisively influence their formation. Nowhere are selling prices "economically real" prices. A succession of distortions ensues from this which each new reform modifies or attenuates without being able to eliminate. Most importantly, as a result of these distortions, the economic reality loses its intelligibility and it becomes almost impossible to calculate real production costs. To eliminate these difficulties it is necessary first of all to institute a system of double book-keeping on all levels which would separate real production costs from monetary calculations based on more or less arbitrary purchase and sale "prices." This is the primary condition for the authorities at the center and, still more important, the producers' collectives in the enterprise being able to make *knowledgeable* decisions—that is, with the minimum indispensable information at their disposal.

In the historic sense, there is a basic contradiction between the principle of planning and the law of value. To Evgenii Preobrazhensky belongs the honor of having been the first to clarify this contradiction and to have formulated the fundamental economic law of the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism—which is that of the progressive substitution of the principle of planning for that of the market.¹⁸ The idea that this substitution has to be a progressive process further implies that the law of value cannot be "eliminated" at a single stroke in the society in transition from capitalism to socialism, any more than commodity production can.¹⁹ It continues to govern in large part—but not completely or automatically—small commodity production in agriculture and the crafts. It continues thereby to *influence*—but not to govern exclusively—exchanges between the public and private sector. It influences likewise the allocation of total resources devoted to the production of con-

sumer goods among the various branches producing directly for the "ultimate consumer."

In this sense, but in this sense only, it may be said that the plan can "utilize" the "law of value" (more exactly, the market mechanisms) to facilitate a more rapid and precise adaptation of the supply of consumer goods to demand, which would take account of the elasticity of this demand both in respect to incomes (and their structure) and to prices (which the plan may have the ability to modify). This is the rational kernel of the Liberman reforms currently being applied in the USSR.

The market mechanisms are, however, not the only or the principal instruments which the plan can use to attain its objectives. Mathematical economic calculations,²⁰ direct consultation of the consumers, discussion in rank-and-file assemblies can be utilized to the same end of balancing supply and demand. These often have the double advantage of making possible a more accurate and democratic representation of the desires of the citizens and of effecting economic adjustments before the fact rather than after, which greatly reduces waste and overhead expenses.

4. Rigid or Flexible Planning

Closely linked to the problem of the reciprocal relationship between the plan and the market is the question of the forms and methods of planning: rigid or flexible, centralized or decentralized. Debates on this have been very largely influenced and obscured by their habitual single initial point of reference—the Stalinist planning "model"—which is overdetailed and overcentralized.²¹

The evils of this "model" are innumerable. And I listed them at a time when it was not yet the fashion in official Communist circles to pillory them.²² Moreover, we need not accept the thesis that this model "suited" the period of "extensive" industrialization but that its utility ends when it becomes necessary to make the turn toward "intensive" industrialization. Even before the second world war, to say nothing of the first postwar decade, the multiplication of more and more explicit and ever more contradictory norms in physical production, money costs, quality, "economy" of raw materials, the wage total, the number of man-hours, the type and range of production "imposed" on the enterprises tended to cause generalized disorder. The plan's main objectives—which at that time were physical production goals—were most often

realized only by violating the other norms, that is by outright negation of the plan ("black-market" purchasing of raw materials, recruitment of additional manpower, the appearance of illegal middlemen, etc.). Considerable waste resulted from this kind of economic management.

This Stalinist "model" was not simply the result of lack of experience, of errors of analysis in theory and practice, or of conceptual gaps. Neither was it the automatic or inevitable reflection of the country's poverty or of the insufficient development of the productive forces. It reflected rather a certain social structure of state power in the Soviet Union. In the last analysis, the Stalinist model of overcentralized and over-detailed planning suited neither the needs of primitive socialist accumulation nor the interests of the Soviet Union as a great state. It suited the needs of a privileged bureaucratic caste and a "model" of political leadership which feared and systematically discouraged any critical spirit, initiative, or democratic discussion and which sought to give sole stress to the "virtues" of mechanical obedience or servility from the bottom to the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy and arbitrary arrogance from the top down.

The need to modify this planning model made itself felt not when it had ceased to produce results in the absolute sense of the word but when it had exhausted its usefulness from the bureaucracy's own point of view. The successive reforms of this model (under Khrushchev first and then under the aegis of Liberman in the USSR, and the different variants in Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, etc.) have tended to substitute *automatic economic mechanisms*, or "conditioned reflexes," for "orders" from above. This has reflected a broadening of the regime's base within the bureaucracy—the substitution of a technocratic and "economic" bureaucracy for a political party bureaucracy—but not among the people.

For as soon as the problem is seen from the standpoint of an efficiently functioning socialist workers' democracy, the dilemma in which the majority of the "reformers" in the East and their apologists in the West are trapped (and which is formulated as follows: either bureaucratic overcentralization or the market mechanisms, arbitrary orders from above or automatic economic stimuli) is vitiated at its base. From the point of view of the mass of workers, sacrifices imposed by bureaucratic arbitrariness are neither more nor less "acceptable" than sacrifices imposed by the blind mechanisms of the market. These represent only two different forms of the same alienation. Even when certain sacrifices are objectively inevitable, they lose

their bitterest edge only when they are the result of free debate and majority vote, that is, when they are freely consented to *by the proletariat as a whole*.²³

The real answer to this false dilemma then is neither over-centralized and overdetailed planning on the Stalin model, nor too flexible, too decentralized planning along the lines of the new Yugoslav system, but democratic-centralist planning under a national congress of workers' councils made up in its large majority of real workers.²⁴ This congress would choose among different planning variants and the majority of its debates would be public and with an opposition present. The planning authorities would be strictly subordinated to it. And it would have the right to abrogate after free discussion any decision made by an enterprise which would endanger the plan's internal cohesion or execution.

In these conditions, the plan would completely abandon the *detailed* orders to the enterprises which were dear to Stalin, but conversely it would not turn to "material incentives" and "financial mechanisms" to carry out the bulk of its objectives. Large investments generally would continue to be decided on centrally according to an order of priorities democratically arrived at. Only repairs and "small investments" would be within the province of the enterprises. The enterprises' profitability would be promoted less by the quest for profits from sales than by an effort to lower costs without reducing quality. Supervision by the workers' collectives would replace supervision by indices or "inspectors" sent down from above. The workers' collectives would have a material interest in the results attained by the enterprises, but only within certain limits, so as not to accentuate income differentials within the working class. The workers' initiative would be encouraged by their free association in decision-making *at all levels* (most importantly at the political level) rather than by their tediously participating in figuring out the details, which is demoralizing in the long run (because it gives the impression of empty discussion, the results depending entirely on a series of factors over which the interested parties often have no control whatsoever).

5. Investments and Consumption

The objective source of all the particular problems and contradictions encountered by the countries which have abolished capitalism since 1917 lies ultimately in their need to carry out "primitive socialist accumulation" simultaneously with building a

new society. This necessity arises out of the temporary isolation of the revolution in a relatively backward part of the world.

However, if this combination is in itself inevitable preceding the overthrow of capitalism in the industrially advanced countries, it by no means follows that a drop in the living standard of the masses or extreme restriction of improvements in private consumption are also inevitable during the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism, even in relatively backward countries. In fact, the coincidence of these phenomena with the beginning of socialist construction in the USSR and Eastern Europe, which was the result of the socioeconomic policy peculiar to Stalinism, did immense worldwide harm to socialism. It identified socialism in the eyes of the masses of the West with a regime of bleak austerity and an uninspiring standard of living going hand in hand with often exorbitant privileges for the rulers.

The economic policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy was founded on two postulates: that the maximum rate of investment assured the speediest economic growth, and that the most rapid economic growth required giving an absolute priority to the development of heavy industry. These two concepts, however, do not stand up to critical examination from the theoretical standpoint, in particular because they disregard the repercussions on efficiency and labor productivity of various given levels of consumption for the producers. Their application in practice in the Soviet Union and in several so-called people's republics has resulted in numerous planning errors, unfulfilled objectives, and manifold disproportions, and thus in needless and avoidable sacrifices for the peoples in question. The same or better results could have been obtained with lower accumulation rates compensated for by a more rapid increase in productivity owing to a sharper rise in the living standard of the producers.

Marxist theory and the practical experience thus lead to similar conclusions: the available resources cannot be arbitrarily divided between investment and consumption on the assumption that the highest growth rates will follow from the largest accumulation fund. More complex and subtle interactions, which are moreover theoretically calculable, arise between investment and consumption so that the economic *optimum* which produces the most rapid and most well-balanced growth will never coincide with the *maximum* rate of investment.

What is true from an overall standpoint is still more so for particular sectors. At most the masses' spirit of sacrifice can be appealed to for a certain period with some success in order to

gain their acceptance of certain restrictions on their consumption. But long-term reductions in food consumption and prolonged periods of housing shortages in new industrial centers inevitably provoke grave social crises which cannot fail to have a negative effect on the growth rate of labor productivity.

In reality the above-mentioned postulates are only the Stalinist theoreticians' rationalization of the grave political error committed by the Stalin faction in the CPSU and of its consequences, that is, of the Soviet leadership's *delay* in launching an accelerated industrialization. This delay forced the bureaucracy to skip over stages, that is, to take the resources to achieve the bases of heavy industry from the current consumption fund over a five- or even a four-year period instead of an eight- to ten-year period.²⁵ In this way, the sacrifices of consumption imposed on the producers were significantly increased, and this in turn caused an investment return far lower than that estimated.

It must be understood that the principal productive force for building socialism is the productive power of increasingly skilled and conscious individuals. That is why all the "reproduction costs of labor-power" (both the private-consumption funds and the costs of education, training, culture, and the democratic functioning of the economic and political system) can by no means be considered "losses" from the standpoint of investment or economic growth. Rather, from the socialist point of view they represent ultimately the most "profitable" investment.

6. Material and Moral Incentives

The problem of using material and moral incentives in building socialism must be examined at once from the macroeconomic and microeconomic standpoints, from the vantage point of society and of the individual. We have just seen that the growth rate cannot be tied to the investment fund alone. The absolute level of the producers' consumption as well as the rate at which this level rises in turn affect economic growth. This means that from the macroeconomic point of view, regular improvement in the producers' standard of living is a "material incentive" indispensable to building socialism. "Negating" it can only mean falling into voluntarism or setting the stage for serious difficulties.

This general statement, however, does not permit a solution of the problem; it only poses it. The real difficulty appears in going from this general problem to the specific one of the

behavior of the different classes, social layers, and individuals.

One other point, however, can be considered as established. In relation to small commodity production (agriculture and private craft production), there is little chance of obtaining increased output and above all of its being maintained over the long run if this is not accompanied by an increase in *real* income. If the state or the market regularly swallows up the peasants' additional product or compensates them for it with a growing quantity of banknotes for which they obtain the same quantity of industrial commodities (consumer or producer goods), they will tend to fall back into a largely closed natural economy.²⁶ The increase in production will remain modest and will not give impetus to overall economic growth, except minimally.

Must the same logic be applied to the individual productivity of the workers? The least that can be said is that the historical experience is far from conclusive on this score. In fact, techniques like Stakhanovism resulted in creating a new division of labor within the labor force which increased the productivity of some by degrading that of others. It is improbable that the overall advantage was very great, especially taking into account the discontent which such formulas must inevitable produce in the working class and its negative effect on labor productivity.

This same observation applies to piece work and all the techniques of intensifying labor, the speedup, etc. Indeed, for these techniques to promote productivity—leaving aside certain forms of constraints inadmissible in countries with a socialist economic base—the “material incentives” must be very considerable. However, these incentives are generally modest, if not marginal. In order for the expanded productivity to represent a net and not simply a gross gain, the increased depreciation of the labor force (including the additional cost of accidents, of more frequent illnesses, malnutrition, etc.) must be taken into account. The net gain will usually turn out to be unimpressive if not nonexistent, to say nothing of the negative effects these techniques have on the unity and combativity of the proletariat.

For all these reasons, techniques that increase productivity by improving the technical level and organization of labor, ultimately give far better results than those obtained by techniques of increasing individual productivity. And such techniques call for little use of individual material incentives. They are furthered at most by collective bonuses or sharing in the supplementary results obtained by the enterprise. Such types of incentives,

moreover, have the advantage that they favor the cohesion and internal solidarity of the working class—insofar, that is, as enterprise parochialism is resolutely combated.

There remains the evident necessity of promoting the technical and cultural education of the producers. Theoretically, this education ought not to be the source of material advantages once society has taken over its expense, once this expense is met by the collectivity and not financed by the producer himself or his family.²⁷ In practice the total absence of benefits would become a counterincentive, if only because of the additional work and effort involved in the attempt to gain education.

Thus it can be considered that a bonus for education is justified according to the Leninist tradition in the matter, as long as it is understood that this difference in the remuneration of unskilled and very skilled labor, of manual and intellectual labor, brings with it certain dangers of degeneration for the society in transition from capitalism to socialism.²⁸ Every measure must be taken to reduce these dangers to a minimum: strict observance of the rule limiting the incomes of the party and state functionaries to those of skilled workers, a strictly limited proportion of higher-paid elements in the representative bodies, strict respect of the right of the rank and file to criticize and keep a check on these elements, access for the workers to all sources of information and means of education, socialist democracy in the political sphere, freedom of tendencies and for the establishment of parties basing themselves on socialism, freedom of discussion and of scientific, artistic, and literary creation, etc., etc.

The importance of "moral incentives" stands out all the more since "material incentives" for individuals are not very profitable economically in big industry and are socially counterindicated. However, "moral incentives"—that is, the devotion of the masses to the revolution, their creative enthusiasm, their conscious participation in building socialism—cannot be maintained in the long run unless they are accompanied by an administration of the state and the economy based on these same masses. Lacking mass participation in the discussion and making of decisions, there is a danger that "moral incentives" will gradually be reduced to mere voluntarist exhortations with less and less effect on productive effort.

7. *"Leadership by a Single Individual" or Workers' Self-Management*

In the Stalin era, the principle of "leadership of the pro-

ductive process by a single individual" (*edinonachalie*), which Lenin advocated in special circumstances and which in principle was applicable to *technical processes* only, was gradually extended to all problems of economic management.²⁹ Even the counterweight of the trade unions was progressively eliminated, which had unquestionably existed in fact, if not by law, until the onset of the five-year plans. This postulate has not been challenged in the Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev period, despite the "de-Stalinization" and a progressive reinforcement of the right of consultation exercised by the union leaders within the enterprises.

This system does not conform to the Marxist tradition in the matter.³⁰ It must necessarily result in a concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a bureaucracy on the one hand, and conversely in a lack of interest on the part of the mass of producers in the productive process. This deprives the work of building socialism of its potentially most powerful impetus.

It is, on the other hand, indisputable that the necessity of individuals submitting to a central authority, as Engels stressed, is confirmed by the evolution of technology, both in large factories and for the economy as a whole. There is no escape from this except by returning to individual craft production or by submitting to the much more alienating sway of the blind forces of the market. However, the inevitable subordination of the individual producers to a conscious centralizing authority does not necessarily imply bureaucratism, authoritarianism, or despotism, once this authority is no longer designated from above and irremovable but is elected by the rank and file and can be recalled at the pleasure of the electors. Those critics who question the possibility of this, as I have pointed out elsewhere,³¹ in the last analysis confuse the social sources of power with the technical forms of its implementation.

"Those who control the social surplus product ultimately control the entire society"; this idea of Trotsky, which he took from Marx, implies that the control of a bureaucratic layer over society can be avoided only if control of the social surplus product remains firmly in the hands of the mass of the producers themselves. The election and recall of the leading body of the enterprises (the workers' council) by all the plant personnel and the subordination of all technical and commercial officials to this body are the keys to real workers' self-management.

The real social surplus product, however, does not emerge

at the level of the individual enterprises but at the level of the overall economy. If the "associated producers" refuse to surrender to the central authorities a part of their right to dispose of the products of their labor, they will not increase but rather decrease their freedom of effective decision-making. For in so doing, they would in the long run subject themselves to the blind tyranny of the spontaneous forces of the market. In the last analysis, delegation by the workers of the right to dispose of this surplus product to a central authority (the congress of workers' councils)—elected by the workers, on which they exercise a check, and whose composition they themselves can alter should disquieting signs appear—safeguards and reinforces the workers' decision-making authority.

The *right* to manage the enterprise in which he works is one thing for the worker; the *effective exercise* of this right is something else again. It is always obstructed by survivals of the past (lack of culture and skill; major worries in other areas, primarily that of assuring his family's daily subsistence; lack of interest due to lack of consciousness, etc., etc.). It is often blocked, moreover, by the socioeconomic reality of the transitional period itself: insufficient information; lack of contacts with his fellow workers at the local, regional, and national levels; limits imposed on the freedom of inspection and discussion; and the excessive length of the working day. It is, in fact, these last factors which are ultimately decisive for the direction of development. When their obstructing role grows stronger, there is a danger that workers' management will tend to become a snare. As these factors disappear, workers' management will acquire ever greater reality.

The key factor is unquestionably a radical reduction of the working day which would make possible a real—and not fictitious—division of the day for each producer between direct production and social management activities in the broad sense of the word (not only at the enterprise level but in the community, the region, and the nation—both in the productive sphere proper and in the broader social, political, and cultural realm); this alone can assure the progressive integration of the production and accumulation functions.

8. Private Agriculture and Collective Agriculture

It is well known that the classics of Marxism were opposed to any forcible liquidation of small peasant ownership. The small peasant was to be integrated into the socialized economy

only after he was fully convinced of its advantages.³²

Engels did not suppose that the maintenance of a private agricultural sector in a socialized economy would create any serious problems for this economy. This is because he posed this problem for countries where industry was already capable of furnishing the countryside with a mounting flood of commodities and where this exchange between town and country would not permit primitive accumulation of private capital in any significant proportions, since the productivity of labor was higher in industry than in agriculture.

The experience of the Soviet Union and of the majority of the so-called people's republics later, and of Yugoslavia and China, has shown that this question is much more complex in relatively underdeveloped countries where the peasantry constitutes the majority of the population. This experience confirms that any attempt to do away forcibly with small peasant ownership, either of the land or an important part of the products of peasant labor, can only have catastrophic effects on agricultural production. The drop in agricultural production in the period of "forced collectivization" in the USSR, and later during the second phase of the Great Leap Forward in China, testifies to the inability of workers' states to *force* millions of peasants to provide *efficient* agricultural labor when they find neither profit nor satisfaction in it. There were analogous experiences, if to a less catastrophic extent, in several East European countries in the nineteen-fifties, especially Poland and Hungary.

However, experience has also shown that an attempt to integrate an essentially private agriculture into a fundamentally socialized economy in underdeveloped countries inevitably creates growing tensions and contradictions which can threaten the very bases of planning and socialized ownership. These experiences of the NEP period in the USSR have been largely confirmed since in East Europe, especially in Poland.

When agriculture is entirely or basically private and socialized industry is still weak, the private peasantry is decisive in feeding the workers, since the economy is too poor to do so through imports. However, this peasantry is not homogeneous. Even in the wake of an equalitarian agrarian reform, it tends to differentiate rapidly into a rich, middle, and poor peasantry. Marketable surpluses show up only in the hands of the first two categories, and such surpluses more and more become concentrated in the hands of the kulaks alone; and they want to sell this surplus *profitably*. If industry is weak, surrender to

this tendency means transferring a growing portion of the social surplus product to private capital accumulation instead of to socialist accumulation.³³ Resistance to this pressure in the same circumstances, however, means running the risk of a "grain suppliers' strike," that is, famine for the workers.

The necessary starting point for the solution of this problem is to recognize the heterogeneous character of the peasantry. It is clear that in conditions of incipient industrialization the rich peasantry, and even part of the middle peasantry, has no interest in giving up the private ownership of their products. But it is also clear that the growing inequality among the peasants, which private production rapidly and inevitably produces, separates out a layer of poor peasants whose paupers' incomes by no means encourage them to hang on at any cost to their private minifundia (to say nothing of the agricultural workers on the large estates and the plantation workers who, in almost all the underdeveloped countries, are ready immediately after the socialist revolution for experiments in collective agriculture). Workers' states must therefore give priority to organizing co-operative farms and/or collectives which will be joined essentially by those poor peasants and agricultural workers. From the outset these farms must receive investments and credits enabling them to operate with a labor productivity far superior to that of the private sector. They must be capable of rapidly guaranteeing their members a standard of living and comfort superior to that of the middle peasants and even to that of a part of the rich peasantry.

The creation of such a sector alone—though still largely a minority sector and based on the genuinely and completely voluntary adhesion of a segment of the peasantry—would set in motion a whole series of mechanisms which would assure the progressive solution of the contradictions between private agriculture and the socialized economy. The provisioning of the towns would be quickly freed from the monopoly of the kulaks.³⁴ Competition between the collectivized and the private agriculture sectors would block the steady rise in the prices of agricultural products by which the kulaks would drain off an increasing part of the social surplus product. The example of a higher level of productivity and life on the cooperative and collective farms would gradually attract a growing proportion of the middle peasants to the public sector. Their integration in the socialized economy would be accomplished not through terror nor lowering their living standard, but by raising it. This would avert an increase in social tension in the countryside with all its negative consequences.

The catastrophic error committed by the Stalin faction in the USSR consisted in *delaying* both the *progressive* collectivization of agriculture and the accelerated industrialization which should have created the mechanical base indispensable for agrarian collectivization.³⁵ The decision to move against the kulak threat was precipitate and panicky because the danger was unforeseen. This move took the form of a *forced* collectivization in which the already existing tractors and agricultural machinery were not sufficient to assure a higher level of productivity for the kolkhozes so created. This was the source of the catastrophic results of thirty years of Stalinist agricultural policy.³⁶

9. Autarchy and Trade With the Capitalist World

The Soviet leaders did not choose an essentially autarchic path of development for the economy of their country either out of a theoretical error or an overestimation of the USSR's economic resources. This road seemed the only valid one to them prior to the victory of the revolution in the industrially advanced countries. Because of the superiority of big imperialist industry, no relatively underdeveloped country can succeed in industrializing under competition with the world market. The state monopoly of foreign trade is an indispensable protective barrier that has enabled countries like the USSR, Poland, and Yugoslavia, to say nothing of China, to create an initial elementary industrial infrastructure.

However, development under the protection of a monopoly of foreign trade and entirely autarchic development are clearly two different notions which must not be confused. The monopoly of foreign trade must protect incipient socialist industry against the competition of cheaper capitalist commodities. But its objective is by no means to reproduce within the borders of a workers' state or group of states, which have abolished capitalism, all branches of agriculture and industry that exist in the rest of the world. Such an undertaking is totally utopian. Entering on this path means the imposition of additional, useless, and avoidable sacrifices on the producers in countries with a socialized economic base.

The correct orientation is that of *calculating* in a deliberate way the advantages and disadvantages of given trade relationships with the international capitalist market, taking account of certain clear priorities (defense, industrial equipment for "launching" industrialization, scientific instruments, etc.). Even the concept of "loss" is a relative one. It may be preferable

to export certain commodities "at a loss" in order to make it possible to import other commodities "at the world market price" when this loss is less than that which would be caused by the establishment of plants condemned to operate "at a loss" for a long period. Such a preference would not be justified, however, when the commodities exported "at a loss" could provide the basis for a manufacturing industry operating "at a profit," both for the national economy and for the international market. Nor would it be justified if the loss caused by these exports would be higher than that incurred by the establishment of new factories to make products out of the exported materials, and which would replace goods previously imported at high costs.

Still less must the *necessity* of protection against foreign competition be confused with a "socialist ideal" of autarchy. This necessity persists, it is clear, only as long as the productivity of labor in the countries which have abolished capitalism is generally lower than in the imperialist countries. With the growth of the productive forces and the extension of the geographic area in which capitalism has been abolished, more and more sectors emerge whose products cost less in terms of overall labor expenditure—with equal quality—than they do in various imperialist countries or even the most advanced imperialist countries. Thenceforth, international trade with the imperialist countries, far from being a necessary evil, becomes a blessing. From then on the international capitalist market is forced through trade to contribute to socialist accumulation in those countries with a socialized economic base. For, in these conditions of higher socialist productivity, commodity exchange involves a transfer of value from the imperialist countries to the workers' states.

The advantages of the international division of labor can be utilized for building socialism first of all through a certain specialization which capitalizes on the particular geographic, climatic, or human resources of the countries that have abolished capitalism. The more industrialization progresses (including the industrialization of agriculture) and the level of productivity rises in a series of branches of the socialized economy, the more the advantages of an international division of labor can be exploited in the workers' states independently of their particular *natural* resources. Then these advantages can be exploited increasingly as a result of technological superiority acquired in this or that industrial area over one or more imperialist countries. The principle by which this objective can be obtained is

ultimately very simple: sell more cheaply than your imperialist competitors but at prices higher than the real costs of production.

Because of their industrialization and their already attained level of development, the USSR and certain so-called people's republics (in particular East Germany and Czechoslovakia) are presently in a position where their level of labor productivity is higher than the underdeveloped countries, which are exclusively exporters of raw materials. By trading with the underdeveloped countries at "world market prices" they exploit them economically, that is, drain toward their economy a part of the labor expended there. Such a policy is in general counterindicated inasmuch as it helps to consolidate the imperialist hold on these countries through "world market prices" and even offers a justification of their exploitation by imperialist capital.³⁷ It becomes a real scandal when it is practiced toward other countries that have abolished capitalism.

10. Economic Relations Among Workers' States

The extension since the second world war of the geographic area in which capitalism has been overthrown poses a certain number of concrete economic problems which could only have been dimly perceived by Marxist theoreticians in a previous period.³⁸ The thorniest problem is determining the desirable degree of national autonomy in setting the plan's objectives and in the use of national resources.

From an abstract point of view, it might be considered that a total pooling of the resources of all the countries that have abolished capitalism, and the formulation of a single plan of development for all these countries, represents the most rational solution; it limits to the utmost overhead expenses and duplication and makes it possible to exploit fully the principle of an international division of labor. However, two arguments weigh against the adoption of this extreme view.

First of all, the historic exploitation of the small nationalities, as well as several numerically large nations, by the big imperialist powers has produced in them a backlash of jealous attachment to their national independence and a mistrust for *all* great powers, including those which have abolished capitalism. Moreover, the national oppression suffered by several of these nations at the hands of the Soviet bureaucracy, above all in the Stalin era,³⁹ has further reinforced this mistrust. Complete economic integration at a single stroke of all workers' states would collide with the national feelings of these peoples,

who are not ready to make important concessions of sovereignty. This obstacle can be ignored only at the cost of grave political and social conflicts. It could be overcome in a positive way only after a rather long transitional phase in which the nationalities in question gained practical experience of entirely unselfish and fraternal behavior on the part of the industrially advanced workers' states.

Moreover, a total pooling of the resources of countries at too disparate levels of development would retard rather than accelerate their overall development. It would redistribute in favor of the most backward countries resources available for the development of industries more advanced and more suited to give impetus to technological development in the noncapitalist economies as a whole. An equal sharing of resources with a country as populous as China would threaten to result in a general drop in living standards in all the other countries of the "camp," which would soon have adverse consequences both in the social and political realm as well as in the economic sphere itself.

However, while a complete pooling of the resources of the noncapitalist camp is inadvisable, completely independent development of each workers' state economy as a unit causes equally irrational effects. Proofs of this irrationality abound today in Eastern Europe and in Asia: parallel development of manufactured items (automobiles, for example) which remain far below the profitability threshold (to say nothing of the optimum magnitudes); the obstinacy of countries like East Germany in developing a steel industry for which they have none of the requisite basic raw materials; Poland's continuing to expand coal production, which is heading directly toward excess capacity and chronic overproduction, simply because coal is considered one of Poland's few "national riches"; the lack of coordination between the USSR and China for common exploitation of the natural resources of Central Asia on both sides of the Sino-Soviet frontier and for developing (including the settlement) of semidesert regions; competition on the international capitalist market of agricultural products and products of light industry of several workers' states (in certain areas this competition extends even to the products of the machine-goods industry), etc., etc. It goes without saying that the narrow nationalist mentality exhibited by the various bureaucracies in power in these countries can only reinforce the objective and subjective obstacles in the way of economic integration.

The most rational solution seems to be one avoiding both extremes, that is, rapid, total integration and "totally independent national development." What must be done is to promote a system of progressive integration of the economies of the workers' states which would respect autonomy of national planning as long as the nations in question were not truly and honestly convinced of the advantages of a surrender of sovereignty, but which would at the same time progress toward the necessary economic unification. This unification should be pursued both through the creation of a series of common institutions and instruments and by a deliberate effort to reduce the gap in the level of development separating the various workers' states.

With regard to institutions, economic integration would be first of all facilitated by the creation of a unified currency zone (first reciprocal, then multilateral convertibility of currencies) and finally a single-currency zone, the creation of common planning bodies in specific sectors, common formulation of projected long-range plans for zones or regions comprising two or more states, etc.

What is essential is that these different experiments do not objectively serve—nor be subjectively felt—as means for subordinating the "poor" countries to the "rich," or for their exploitation by them. This is why a deliberate effort to transfer resources from the most developed workers' states to the less developed is absolutely indispensable. If this is done in degrees which would not subvert growth possibilities in the most developed workers' states, or a constantly rising standard of living for their peoples, such a transfer could become the principal motive force of economic integration. This transfer is required all the more from the moral and political standpoint—proletarian internationalism—because in the last analysis it is the only way to compensate for the advantages the more advanced workers' states gain from their trade with the less advanced states, advantages which result from the unequal exchange inherent in trade relations at market prices among countries with a greatly differing average labor productivity.

NOTES

1. Cf. for example this passage in Engels' *The Housing Question*: "To speculate on how a future society might organize the distribution of food and dwellings leads directly to *utopia*. The utmost we can do is to state from our understanding of the basic conditions of all modes of production up to now that with the downfall of the capitalist mode of production certain forms of appropriation which existed in society hitherto will become impossible. Even the transitional measures will everywhere have to be in accordance with the relations existing at the moment. In countries of small landed property they will be quite different from those in countries where big landed property prevails, etc." (in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, I, p. 572).

2. In his writings on the Paris Commune, he clearly saw the danger of the bureaucratization of the society in transition from capitalism to socialism.

3. Cf. the famous passage in the Introduction to *Grundrisse* where Marx, in dealing with the method of political economy, points out that the reduction of "concrete labor" to "abstract labor," to labor in general as the creator of wealth, was possible only after the capitalist mode of production had created a form of society "in which individuals could easily move from one job to another" (Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, p. 25, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1953).

4. This formula, which is owed to V. M. Smirnov, was used for the first time in an extensive way by Evgenii Preobrazhensky in his *New Economics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965, pp. 79-136.

5. For example, the thesis—maintained (at the prompting of Pannekoek) by the German KAPD (Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands—Communist Workers' Party of Germany) and by Bordiga—that capitalism had been reintroduced into the USSR after the onset of the New Economic Policy (NEP). These postulates are no more than the direct offspring of those maintained by the social democrats hostile to the October Revolution, in particular Otto Bauer (*Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie*).

6. As early as 1923, in *The New Course*, Trotsky concurrently advocated a return to Soviet democracy and accelerated planned industrialization.

7. I will come back later to the catastrophic consequences brought on by delaying industrialization and the introduction of progressive collectivization in agriculture—particularly in making the Stalin faction rush into a forced total collectivization of agriculture after 1928.

8. Cf. Nikolai Bukharin, "Ökonomik der Transformationsperiode," and especially Otto Neurath, *Wesen und Weg der Sozialisierung*, Munich, 1919.

9. In particular Kautsky's work, *Das Erfurter Program* (9th Edit., Dietz Verlag, Stuttgart, 1908, pp. 158-59), which he wrote in 1892, educated successive generations of Marxists, including the Russian Marxists.

10. Need it be recalled that, according to Marx, "Only such products can become commodities with regard to each other, as result from different

kinds of labor, each kind being carried on independently and for the account of private individuals." *Capital*. International Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 42.

11. If the producers are unable to make independent decisions in regard to consumption, there is the danger that, in the absence of an abundance of use values, their labor will tend to become forced labor.

12. This is not true for services, however. Here, in accordance with the resources which society is prepared to devote to these services, distribution can be effected on the basis of need in health, education, urban transport, electricity, gas, or housing.

13. See, for example, the article published by the Czechoslovak weekly *Literární Noviny* in the summer of 1967 which traced the recent development of prostitution in that country to the fact that "individual affluence is the standard for judging the value of persons in Czechoslovakia. An individual with a high standard of living is a 'lepší' (a better element); one with a low standard of living is a 'necenný' (a worthless person) . . ." See also the Soviet judge's extraordinary reply to the poet Brodski at the time of his trial, "How can you prove you are not a parasite if you only earn 50 rubles a month?"

14. Ernest Mandel, *Traité d'Economie Marxiste*, Julliard, Paris, 1962, II, Ch. 17.

15. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1955, p. 199.

16. Especially not forgetting to include in the calculation of investment project costs the infrastructure and road-building work; the costs of transporting the raw material and finished products; the detractions from the natural environment it causes (and indirect consequences like air and water pollution); and an estimate of the social costs incurred by the transfer of manpower, the necessity of building homes, schools, and distribution centers, etc. In the capitalist system, the majority of these costs are not taken into consideration in calculating the "profitability" of individual enterprise because they are socialized (the state takes charge of them), or else purely and simply disregarded. Including these elements in the calculating in a socialized economy properly increases its rationality and scientific character.

17. See, for example, Ulbricht's "Die Bedeutung des Werkes 'Das Kapital' von Karl Marx für die Schaffung des entwickelten gesellschaftlichen Systems des Sozialismus in der DDR und den Kampf gegen das staatsmonopolistische Herrschaftssystem in Westdeutschland," in *Neues Deutschland*, No. 13, September 1967.

18. Evgenii Preobrazhensky, *The New Economics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 136-146.

19. Trotsky (*Revolution Betrayed*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1945, p. 67) speaks even of the "extreme extension" of commodity circulation in the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism. The context indicates, however, that he saw the extension of this commodity production as arising essentially from the disappearance of the enormous natural economy sector which existed in the Russian countryside (those sectors "which produced to consume on the spot"). It is in this sense that his formula must be understood: "All products and services begin for the first time in history to be exchanged for one another" (*Ibid.*, emphasis added). That obviously does not apply to countries more advanced than the Russia of 1917 where natural economy and subsistence farming have

largely disappeared under capitalism. It does not apply either to the USSR of today, the second-ranking industrial power in the world, where without any doubt the material conditions exist for the beginning of the disappearance of the market categories.

20. For example, projected curves of restructuration of household expenditures regarding different groups of goods and services for different income categories could be drawn upon condition that there were no distortions or abrupt price jumps, and on the condition that these curves covered an already sufficient number of years during which a given structure of expenditures began to change.

21. See in this respect especially Janos Kornai's work, *Overcentralization in Economic Administration*; the article by David Gullick ("Initiative and Independence of Soviet Plant Managers," in the *American Slavic and Eastern European Review*, October 1952); and the article by Joseph S. Berliner ("The Informal Organization of the Soviet Firm" in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 1952), etc., etc.

22. *Traité d'Economie Marxiste*, II, pp. 240-273. See also my article "La Reforme de la Planification Soviétique et ses Implications" in *Les Temps Modernes*, June 1965.

23. The Yugoslav experience has confirmed the utopian and apologetic character of the view that self-management at the enterprise level deproletarianizes the workers. Since the market economy brings with it the danger of a reappearance of unemployment as well as penalization of the workers in certain enterprises for wrong decisions (overinvestment, etc.) made in other enterprises, they are far from having become the "masters of their destiny."

24. This should be assured by setting a maximum income for the great majority of the members of this congress so as to prevent the workers' councils from being essentially represented by bureaucrats.

25. See in this respect the exact figures which are cited in my *Traité d'Economie Marxiste*, II, pp. 213-16 and 303-309.

26. In Poland in recent years this has produced the famous "pig and horse cycle": the resources which the peasants procure through the increased sale of ham are invested in raising grain production—used to feed an additional number of horses on the private farms, which makes possible expanded pig raising.

27. Cf. Engels, *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung in der Wissenschaft*, pp. 194-95 of the edition of the Verlaggenossenschaft Ausländischer Arbeiter in der USSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1934.

28. Cf. Lenin's *The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Power*, p. 379 in *Questions of the Socialist Organization of the Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, undated, p. 108: "The corrupting influence of high salaries—both on the soviet authorities . . . and upon the mass of the workers—is indisputable."

29. Certain of Lenin's formulas were clearly ambiguous. See especially *The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Power*, in *op. cit.*, pp. 133: "The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals in definite processes of work, in definite aspects of purely executive functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order

repeatedly and tirelessly to root out bureaucracy." See also the statement on "individual leadership" on p. 126.

30. Cf. Engels' debate with the anarchists ("On Authority," 1872), in which he asserts the necessity of a centralized authority in the enterprises but makes clear that this authority must emanate either from elected delegates or from the decisions by majority vote of a general assembly (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Moscow, 1950, I, pp. 575-78).

31. I examined this question in detail in my book *La Formation de la Pensée Economique de Karl Marx*, Paris, Maspero, 1967, pp. 195-98.

32. Frederick Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works in Two Volumes*, II, p. 433.

33. Lenin correctly stressed that petty commodity production constantly tends to reproduce capitalism. V. I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind," in *Questions of the Socialist Organization of the Economy*, pp. 289-290; and *Collected Works*, XXXII, p. 414, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1960.

34. This has already occurred in Yugoslavia where the collective sector of agriculture, holding only 15 percent of the land, produces more than a third of the agricultural produce. In general, the agricultural policy conducted in Yugoslavia since the mid-nineteen-fifties can be considered correct (see E. Kardelj: *Les Problèmes de la Politique Socialiste dans les Campagnes*, Editions La Nef, Paris, 1960).

35. Moshe Lewin (*La Paysannerie et le Régime Soviétique 1928-1930*, Paris, Mouton, 1966) notes that the construction of the tractor factory at Tsarytsyn had been decided on as early as 1924 but that nothing was begun in practice until 1929. Therefore, in 1928-29 70 percent of the old and new kolkhozes had no tractors.

36. From 1930 to 1955, per capita agricultural production (except for industrial crops) remained lower in the USSR than in Czarist Russia in 1916. For animal husbandry, the level of 1913, or that of 1928, was not yet overtaken even in 1960, except for swine.

37. See the speech of Ernesto Che Guevara to the Afro-Asian economic seminar in Algiers, in *Che Guevara Speaks*, Merit Publishers, New York, 1967, pp. 106-117.

38. See, however, Evgenii Preobrazhensky: *The New Economics*, which foresees the creation of a system of mutual assistance to be established among all the countries where the proletariat has been victorious.

39. This was exposed at the time by the Yugoslav Communist leaders (see Melentije Popovic: *Des Rapports Economiques Entre Etats Socialistes*, Le Livre Yugoslave, Paris, 1949). Recently, the Chinese Communists exposed the fact that in trade between the USSR and Outer Mongolia a Soviet tire is exchanged for 40 Mongolian sheep, a meter of Soviet woolen cloth for 50 kilograms of Mongolian wool, one Soviet bicycle for four Mongolian sheep, etc., etc. (*Renmin Ribao*, September 13, 1967).

13. IS MARXISM-LENINISM OBSOLETE?

By Joseph Hansen

Where does Marxism-Leninism stand a half century after the October Revolution?

This question is not academic. It has become an integral component of world politics since the end of World War II. The foreign policy of the greatest capitalist power has centered on "containing" and eventually rolling back "Communism." The biggest witch-hunt in American history—launched by Truman, carried to a frenetic pitch under the guidance of the late Senator McCarthy, and still virulent in many fields of American life—was directed against the "Communist threat." Washington has repeatedly intervened in civil conflicts in other countries, toppling governments as in Iran and Guatemala, sending U. S. troops to Lebanon and the Dominican Republic, or financing and organizing mercenaries as in the Bay of Pigs invasion and in the Congo—all in the name of fighting "Communism." Intervention of this kind has twice been escalated into a war of such size as to risk a major conflagration that could end in a nuclear catastrophe: in Korea in 1950-52, in Vietnam today.

The principal source of this "Communist threat" has been the Soviet Union—at least up to the time of Mao and Fidel Castro. Behind the Soviet Union, the bourgeois ideologues and propagandists invariably trace the genesis of the threat to the theoretical system of Karl Marx and the political methods of V. I. Lenin.

Thus the trinity of the Soviet Union, Lenin, and Marx has been a perennial target of attack. The propaganda, like most of the war propaganda turned out by these reactionary sources, is crude enough. Its principal objective is mere brain-washing.

Something more plausible is required, however, to have deep or lasting effect on serious people genuinely concerned about the truth. Thus the more sincere, or more skilled, bourgeois theoreticians make at least a pretense of examining Marxism-Leninism in an objective way. Their output is prodigious but singularly lacking in originality. The same theme

is insistently repeated decade after decade: Marxism is not a science but only a dogma.

Besides the anti-Marxist literature which frankly and unashamedly defends the capitalist system, there is another current which proclaims its opposition to capitalism but finds enough truth in the attacks of the critics to warrant the overhauling of basic Marxist ideas. The term "revisionism" was used in the late nineties by Eduard Bernstein, who considered the term an honorable one. As this leading figure in the generation after Engels saw it, the evidence showed that some aspects of Marxism had become outmoded or been refuted. He attributed some of Marx's errors to his "Hegelianism," a rather widespread view that reflected the narrow empiricism of the times.

Bernstein concluded that the capitalists had learned to manage their system sufficiently well to avoid depressions of a catastrophic nature. He held that "reason" had gained sufficient ascendancy to lower the probability of war, and that the democratic process made it possible to achieve a gradual introduction of socialism.

The immediate social roots of Bernstein's views were to be found in the conservative labor bureaucracy, particularly in Germany. But the ultimate source of Bernstein's optimism about capitalism and depreciation of scientific socialism can be gathered from his view that the working class is insufficiently cultured to exercise power without first going through a long period of education; that in the colonial world the Western powers were performing a progressive mission as a whole; and that the foreign policy of Hohenzollern Germany was not entirely without merit. To his credit, Bernstein claimed no originality for his views. In fact they reflected arguments emanating from such bourgeois theorists as Böhm-Bawerk, a leading economist of the Austrian marginal-utility school.

Bernstein's outlook has been refuted by all the major events beginning with 1914. An epoch of wars, revolutions and colonial uprisings opened; the class struggle reached pitches of intensity foreseen only by the most farsighted socialists; the "rule of reason" gave way in Western Europe to the rule of fascist barbarism; capitalism began oscillating between catastrophic depression and feverish prosperity, an essential ingredient of which is preparation for wars of massive destructiveness. Although Bernstein's prophecies did not survive the test of events, his arguments have lingered on to this day.

A later revisionist current took form under Stalin. Unlike the preceding social-democratic tendency, Stalinism did not advocate or proclaim "revisionism." Its central thesis was that it is possible to build "socialism" (and later "communism") in a single country, and a backward one at that. This theory constituted a gross revision of Marxism, which views socialism as the coming international system based on the achievements of at least *several* of the most advanced capitalist countries.

Lenin and Trotsky viewed the Soviet Union as a *transitional* society which was compelled to carry out tasks historically belonging to the capitalist phase (agrarian reform, industrialization) by means that are socialist in principle (expropriation of private ownership of the key sectors of the economy, introduction of overall planning).

Stalin also revised the Bolshevik program of seeking, from the base secured in Russia, to foster and support socialist revolutions in other countries. The displacement of the internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky by narrow nationalistic concepts reflected the social interests of the bureaucratic caste that arose in the isolation imposed on the Russian Revolution. The retrogressive outlook, of which this revisionism was an expression, was carried to monstrous extremes in the liquidation of the revolutionary-socialist leaders and cadres assembled by Lenin, vast purges of all oppositionists, including potential ones, the establishment of forced labor camps, autocratic personal rule, and the virtual deification of the dictator.

This revisionist current, albeit with the elimination of the worst excesses, was continued under Khrushchev and those who followed him. Its hallmark internationally is the line of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, meaning collaboration with the capitalist class or at least its alleged "progressive" sectors, and promulgation of the "parliamentary road" to power—a revival of the concepts of Bernstein's time. Little attempt is made to offer theoretical justification for this line. In the manner of Stalin it is simply advanced as a dogma, sometimes accompanied with slanderous attacks against revolutionary socialists and epithets like "adventurists," "putschists," "agents of imperialism," or worse for those who adhere to the classical program of Marxism.

This school of revisionism is still strong but is on the wane.

Still another current, which has emerged in the past few years, particularly in the United States and England, is the "New Left." While it owes heavy debts to its reformist prede-

cessors, going back to Bernstein, it is not inclined to acknowledge these obligations. The fresh packaging is thought to be enough to assure salability of a rather shopworn product. The main, perhaps distinguishing, feature of its ideology is lack of confidence in the working class. The relative quiescence of organized labor for some two decades, particularly in the United States and Britain, as a result of the long, artificially sustained prosperity, is taken to be a permanent feature, an inherent characteristic of the working class itself.

Before considering the arguments of these schools at closer range, it would provide a useful counterpoint to state briefly the central postulates of scientific socialism.

1) *It is humanist.* Economic activities involve human beings. Whatever the technological and sociological conditions may be, human beings in a given social formation work up the materials taken from nature into the means needed to sustain them as individuals, as groups, as a species. In the final analysis, all economic relations and their corresponding categories originate in this human labor activity—including the enigmatic category of “value” clarified by Marx.

If this point seems obvious enough, it is not so to many bourgeois ideologists and those influenced by them. They find the source of economic categories in objects—commodities, rare metals, money; or in vague abstractions like “wants and desires,” “ability,” “scarcity,” “supply and demand,” etc.

It was Marx’s great merit, following the insights provided by Ludwig Feuerbach, to disclose the reification involved in the bourgeois outlook. Underlying such things as commodities and other concrete forms of capital are relations between people, which in our time primarily take the form of relations between exploiting and exploited classes and the various sectors of these classes.

With his proof that the bourgeois outlook is largely an unconscious projection, a secular version of the religious way of viewing the world, Marx at the same time established that his own approach was based on social reality. Thus in the case of gold, Marx showed that the “precious” quality attached to its physical properties by the miser, banker, or bourgeois entrepreneur, or those who think like them, is illusory. Under Marx’s procedure, the “precious” quality of gold is seen to derive from the immense human labor exerted in searching for it, mining and refining it. Its exchange value, in short, is derived from the real world of human activities. The bourgeois procedure, at best, puts things upside down, leads to

endless confusion, and stands in the way of any genuine progress in understanding the economic system, its origin, development, and future evolution. This is the fundamental basis of Marx's claim to having founded a science of society.

2) *Scientific socialism is materialist.* Nature and labor are the twin bases of society. The evolution of human society hinges in the final analysis on the development of technology and the possibilities this opens up for more productive organization of the labor process. This criterion of productive powers, of increased efficiency of labor, provides a solid objective basis for determining progress, whatever one's opinion may be of the dominant cultural values of a given time.

In our epoch of the production expert, the time-study man, and such an outpouring and development of laborsaving devices as to give rise to the term, "cybernetic revolution," the key role of technology and the organization of the labor process as the foundation for broadening mankind's access to culture, leisure time, and more bountiful well-being seems obvious to the point of banality. Not so with those who would debate with Marx. For them "free enterprise," "free competition," "the public interest," and similar spirits still rule man's economic enterprise.

3) *Scientific socialism recognizes the key role played by the class struggle.* While Marx and Engels were not the first to perceive the class struggle or its economic roots, they did establish a firm basis for exploring its material basis and its multiple ramifications, not only in politics, government, and the state, but in remoter fields such as art and literature.

It is not too difficult to determine the interests of the various classes in a completely objective way. What statesman in his real calculations proceeds today otherwise than on the basis of such calculation? If the tangle of class interests appears obscure at times, every sharp struggle generally brings clarification, often to very wide layers.

4) *Scientific socialism is historical.* Marx's procedure enabled him to establish that capitalism had its origin in qualitatively different preceding social systems. If this irritates certain bourgeois ideologists who refuse to acknowledge anything less than timelessness for the conditions of their system, the burden of proof is on them to show how such a common, ordinary phenomenon as an economic system—merely a way of organizing the collective labor process—can be immune to the universal law of change affecting everything else. It is not sufficient to point to the invariants of "human nature."

Anthropologists have provided abundant evidence on how variable human characteristics and capacities are. Marx's conclusions were derived from a most thorough study of the origin of capitalism as well as the inherent tendencies of this least stable and most disruptive of all economic systems.

Thus Marx was able to offer a rational explanation for the periodic appearance of revolutions—those great upsurges of collective energy that have at times taken humanity forward at great speed, toppling or engulfing every obstacle in their path.

The bourgeois view that capitalism is timeless, or everlasting, compels its theorists, if they are to be consistent, to view revolutions as irrational and unnecessary, even the revolutions in which their own system was born—not to speak of the revolutions bringing it to a close.

5) *Scientific socialism takes an overall view.* Marx approached his subject in its totality, as a development in time with a beginning and an end. With the establishment of its time limits, the capitalist system can thus be compared both with the systems that preceded it and the one succeeding it, insofar as the latter can be foreseen by extrapolating the development of technology, the organization of the labor process, and the modifications in the social structure that have occurred under capitalism (constant strengthening of the social weight of the proletariat at the expense of all other classes).

From the viewpoint of the survival, well-being, and advancement of the human species, a basis is thereby provided for judging how far mankind has come from its animal origins. If we utilize as our measure the gains made in modifying or controlling natural processes, then progress has certainly been made. Furthermore the nature of the progress can be stated in objective, verifiable terms (growth of productive power, population, knowledge, etc.). The laws governing the processes giving rise to this progress can be stated in a similar way.

Arguments to the contrary must, in the final analysis, advance norms of a subjective nature such as the "losses" entailed by the development of civilization. Arguments of this sort are largely irrelevant and most certainly not scientific because they disregard the most decisive factors in human history.

6) *Scientific socialism is dialectical.* Marx's procedure makes it possible in principle to study in a fruitful way reciprocal actions, modifying forces, countertendencies, and combinations of the most varied nature. It is a gross distortion or

misunderstanding of Marx's scientific socialism to say, as Arthur P. Mendel does in the October 1966 *Foreign Affairs* ("The Rise and Fall of 'Scientific Socialism'"), that it "represents a transposition into sociological and historical terminology of classical mechanics, now radically undermined by the theories of relativity, quantum physics, probability and indeterminacy."

Marx was fully aware of the role of chance and probability not only in the determination of such economic categories as prices but in the outcome of specific events in the class struggle. It is not necessary to read very far in *Capital* to discover this. A good example in the first chapter is Section 3 on the development of money from its lowly origin in accidental acts of barter.

Mendel's analogy is defective even if we accept it at face value. Twentieth-century developments have restricted but not nullified the validity of the Newtonian mechanics. The laws of classical mechanics and quantum physics apply to different levels of phenomena. Is Mendel willing then to grant that Marx's scientific socialism holds up as well as does classical mechanics in the field in which classical mechanics applies? The erudite academician should think this over carefully.

7) *Scientific socialism is not a set of dogmas.* The essence of scientific socialism is contained in Marx's dialectical materialist method, for this makes it possible to analyze new developments in objective reality. It is not surprising that some of today's developments were unforeseen by Marx or foreseen unclearly or one-sidedly; by following his procedures the necessary adjustments can be made and the body of Marxist theory enriched. Scientific socialism maintains its scientific character by hospitality to historical novelties and its capacity to recognize and incorporate them. (We leave aside the question of the quacks and cultists who profess to be "Marxists.")

Little is said about Marx's method—the heart of scientific socialism—by those who try to demolish his conclusions. Even the once-current fashion of assailing Marx for his "Hegelianism" is dying out. (It has been replaced by efforts to pit the young "humanist" Marx against the Marx of *Capital*.) His foes today generally rest their case either on the fact that some of the trends in capitalism observed by Marx have been checked in some countries by countertrends (the impoverishment of the masses) or trends which he did not anticipate (the rise of a new middle class). Their trump card is the point that, although Marx predicted that capitalism would be overturned by the

working class, the goal still remains to be achieved almost a century and a quarter after the *Communist Manifesto*.

Where Marx has been fully confirmed with the passage of time, as in his conclusions on the accumulation and concentration of capital expressed in the dominance of big business and high finance, the extension of the factory system, the introduction of laborsaving machinery, the domination of the state by the capitalist class, the disruptive expansion of the capitalist system, its explosive contradictions, and so on, they remain silent.

They brush aside and devalue the material accumulated, sifted, analyzed, placed in logical order, and explained by Marx in his study of the processes of the capitalist system as valid for the capitalism of his day, but not for the capitalism of our time. They make out the descendants of the pirates, slave traders and robber barons to be a placid and benevolent lot. Unlike their progenitors, they are concerned about social security from the cradle to the grave for those who dwell in the slums and ghettos at home, while their interest in other countries centers around the welfare and democratic rights of the teeming poor to be found there, particularly those inhabiting the colonial regions endowed with rich natural resources.

Is it more humane, or a mark of progress, to burn little children with napalm than to work them from dawn to dusk in the mills?

What Marx offered is not a mere exposé of the excesses committed by the capitalists of his day in carrying the logic of their system to extremes, but an analysis of the material basis of that logic; i.e., the processes governing the operation of this system. The significance of the exposures he and Engels made of the English factories in the past century is that the evils—whether in extreme or ameliorated form—were inherent in the working of the system itself and thus served to verify the correctness of their findings concerning the main tendencies. Hence the analysis retains its validity and relevance so that every serious student is impressed by how modernly Marx reads and how truthfully he depicted the workings of the economic system in which we still live.

8) *Marx's forecasts concerning the future society are not of primary importance but are logical derivatives from his analysis of capitalist society.* They can only provide general indications about the nature of the future transitional society and its ultimate culmination in a communist classless society of such abundance as to definitively end the millenia of poverty, with all its attendant restrictions and evils. His forecasts do not have

an idealistic, utopian, or dogmatic character. They do not depend upon preconceptions of human nature other than a judgment of its demonstrated capacity to adjust within certain limits to the economic systems in which people find themselves. Still less do Marx's extrapolations involve any "best" system under which to live.

Marx's vision of the future is drawn from logically extending the socialization of the labor process, the advance of science and technology, and the concomitant tendency to introduce planning on a massive scale. While capitalism has given enormous impetus to these trends, it has kept them within property forms based in principle on the individual ownership of the means of production. This bars science from being properly and thoroughly utilized in organizing the economy, maintains the economy on an anarchistic level, and preserves competitive forms that become more and more explosive and destructive, particularly on the international arena.

If these limitations, which are a heritage of the primitive stage of commodity production from which capitalism evolved, were to be removed, the socialized labor process, the principle of planning, the development of technology, and the application of science would enable society as a whole to surge forward at a truly revolutionary rate.

The beneficent ramifications in all fields can scarcely be calculated. It would be pointless to attempt to visualize them in detail in any case, since this will be the work of future generations. The paramount task of the present generation is to carry out the political and social revolution necessary to establish the basis for these developments. That was the way Marx viewed the connection of the present with the future.

9) *Scientific socialism is rational.* This striking characteristic has constituted its greatest appeal to those able to transcend the narrow outlook associated with capitalism and the moods of pessimism and irrationalism generated by its decay. Marxism offers a supremely rational insight into the entire rise and decline of the period of class struggles. This view in turn provides a realistic basis for ascertaining the most fruitful way to expend one's own efforts and make a positive contribution toward bringing this difficult and painful epoch to a close. In addition to its political effectiveness, the serious student of Marxism can receive incomparably rich and rewarding insights into the philosophical, cultural, artistic, and even psychological phenomena of our times. ♡

10) *Scientific socialism is not averse to innovations but wel-*

comes fresh acquisitions. Among the most noteworthy developments based on Marx's contributions are Lenin's analysis of the imperialist stage of capitalism, now shaping the major course of world politics, and Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" which offers an explanation of why capitalism, in the opening stages of the world socialist revolution, has tended to succumb at its fringes rather than in the major centers of industrial, financial and political power.

Lenin also contributed valuable teachings on the question of oppressed nationalities, the political alliance of the workers with the peasantry, and the building of a combat party to lead the masses to attainment of political power.

Trotsky's analyses of the nature of Stalinism and of fascism were further important additions.

Most important of all, Marxism-Leninism did not remain a mere theory, a set of formulas and studies confined to the shelves of libraries. It helped direct the October Revolution, actually establish a postcapitalist state, and successfully defend that revolution and workers' state against a sea of foes. This remains an imperishable example of the verification of theory by actual practice.

In a most unexpected way, the practical experience of the Cuban Revolution also offered a unique new verification of Marxist theory. There a youthful leadership began with the burning conviction that the Batista regime offered no recourse but armed struggle. Accepting this framework laid down by imperialism and its native agents, the Cubans went ahead—and found they had taken the road to socialism. Rather than draw back, upon making this discovery the key leaders proved intelligent and honest enough to draw the appropriate conclusions. Trotsky's prediction that another Marx was unlikely to appear in the immediate future but that revolutionists of action were sure to move into the center of the stage thus found striking confirmation. The Cubans put this thought into a slogan—"The duty of every revolutionist is to *make* the revolution!"

Having indicated the leading ideas of scientific socialism, let us turn to the criticisms of the Marxist outlook by current propagandists of the capitalist system. Their line of attack is well illustrated by the article mentioned above, "The Rise and Fall of 'Scientific Socialism.'" The author, a professor of Russian history at the University of Michigan, plays on a theme going back to the eighteen-nineties. According to this, Marx spent his life in a library laboriously constructing a "myth" that abundance could be achieved for the masses if capitalism was done away with and socialism established.

This "explanation" of Marx's achievement is given a modern dress by referring to the Soviet Union, where, Mendel claims, the myth was used to justify inhuman sacrifices in the name of progress and the generations to come. The fantasy concocted by Marx proved "irrelevant in the advanced Western countries" and is now increasingly questioned in the Soviet Union itself. Today the best Soviet thinkers, Mendel contends, are demanding "honesty" and a genuinely scientific approach instead of the "hateful obligation of corrupting their talents in the service of dogma." "Rational price, profit, interest calculations, marginal-utility theory and advanced mathematical and 'cybernetic' models are, consequently, replacing primitive techniques associated with the sacred labor theory of value and the fetish of maximum 'command' planning."

The basic assumption in Mendel's argumentation is clear enough: no definite and central line of evolutionary development is discernible in human history — all that really exists at bottom are certain propensities inherent in human nature. The capitalist system, in the final analysis, is grounded in the genes. Adam Smith had it exactly right when he made the acute observation, "Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog."

Others of this school, less crude in their polemics than Mendel, including some who grant a certain value to Marxism as an instrument of criticism or an ethical creed, consider that socialism has been invalidated as a science by the "failure" of the workers in the West to carry out a socialist revolution or the "failure" of the Soviet government to represent the revolutionary interests of the working class. Unwilling to concede that human society is an exception to the universal processes of evolutionary change evident in all other sectors of the universe, some find evidence of a supposed "convergence" between capitalism and the now "mellowing" planned economy of the Soviet Union. Each of the two competing industrial societies is taking on the best characteristics of the other. A liberalizing, democratic tendency, allegedly borrowed from the West, is thus appearing in Soviet society under guise of "de-Stalinization"; and more and more planning at a governmental level is appearing in the capitalist countries in response to the Soviet challenge and the Soviet example. This represents progress of a kind, in the opinion of these thinkers, but progress that deviates far from the historic pattern predicted by Marx.

This theory is quite prevalent; some even advance it in the style of a plank in an updated program for enlightened tech-

nocrats and partisans of the "New Left." Thus in the summer 1966 issue of the *Partisan Review* George Lichtheim suggests that "the U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. are beginning to look somewhat similar, and that it is desirable (as well as probable) for them to become more alike still. . . ."

Among its many dubious elements, this theory leaves out of account the nuclear arms race. If the two societies are converging, why are they stockpiling the bomb? This question is particularly pertinent in regard to the United States, which started the race towards doomsday. Viewed from this angle, the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. appear to be converging like two express trains headed toward each other on a single track.

The substance of the theory is an updated variation of the gradualism advanced by such figures as Eduard Bernstein at the turn of the century. Capitalism, it was thought, had become matured or mellowed enough, or sufficiently civilized, to bow to reason and the popular will as expressed through the democratic process. At the same time certain aspects of Marxism had been "refuted," such as its theory of a devastating economic crisis; or had become "outmoded," as in its formula "dictatorship of the proletariat"; or had reached the point where it could discard "doctrines" of a dogmatic nature like the Hegelian "scaffolding" of dialectics used by Marx. Thus it was now possible to bridge capitalism and socialism through the parliamentary process. The idea of a violent revolution — to the relief of everyone — could be discarded.

Today's theory of "convergence" of antagonistic states is not argued nearly as well as in Bernstein's time, when it was presented as a convergence of conflicting classes, harmonizing the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. For instance, it fails to show how convergence can cross the borderline into merger without a violent struggle. In Bernstein's time it was held that this could occur through electoral decision and a parliamentary majority. How and where will the gradual evolution of opposing systems reach the point of qualitative change into identity today? In the United Nations? Nobody takes that body seriously enough to even suggest it. The theorists of the "convergence" of the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. lack even parliamentary shadows to point to. To be sure, the diplomatic needs of the Soviet bureaucracy may partially coincide with those of Washington and bring the two closer together for a time. This happened in the nineteen-thirties, during the second world war, and is now in the cards again. But the disruption of relations after each such essay at collaboration betrays the underlying irreconcilability of their social structures.

An associated line of argumentation would have us believe that a basic flaw has turned up in Marx's analysis of capitalism. The Keynesian economic engineers, having gained a "sophisticated" insight into the workings of the capitalist system, are now able to take timely preventive measures which can eliminate depressions of major proportions like the one of the thirties. By manipulating taxes, interest rates, public works, money and credit, they can cool down the system when it gets "overheated" or warm it up when it is struck by a sudden chill and thus keep it in good health.

As proof that the system can actually be controlled by such means, they point to the fact that no major depression has recurred since the thirties, that on the contrary capitalism has experienced an unprecedented boom, above all in the United States.

This argument is particularly fraudulent since the necessity to utilize government controls on a vast scale to manipulate the economy shows that something is fundamentally wrong with a system that is supposed to run by itself on the basis of "private" initiative. The prolonged boom is also not very convincing or conclusive evidence of the health of the system. It began, not as a fresh normal expansion of the system but as a result of the colossal expenditures for World War II, followed by the immense outlays needed for the postwar recovery. (These "scientists" always leave out of account, too, the losses entailed by the war and the major setback dealt to civilization as a whole by the devastation and slaughter.)

It is highly significant, too, that the postwar boom has been accompanied by a continual rise in the national debt, which now reaches astronomical proportions in the United States, the wealthiest of the capitalist powers. True, the same economists—unlike their forebears—argue that the existence of a colossal and growing national debt is a matter of indifference. The debt, nonetheless, does not stand exactly on the credit side of the ledger for society as a whole.

Finally, the boom has been maintained only by continual government spending on a scale never before seen in history. One of the major items in this spending is preparation for another and ultimate war.

In their own way, the vast government outlays in the development of such new fields as nuclear energy and the exploration of space likewise bespeak the limitations of capitalist enterprise—it is becoming increasingly difficult for any corporation, no matter how huge and powerful, to undertake socially required

developments on the scale demanded in the modern world. The connection of private capital with these advances is becoming more and more parasitic.

It is one of the ironies of history that the contentions of the ideologues of capitalism against scientific socialism are, in essence, merely variations of a single argument—that Marxism is irrational and cannot therefore be adopted by any intelligent, fair-minded person.

In truth, the rationality of the Marxist outlook and program stands out in such sharp contrast to the irrationality and anarchism of capitalism and finds such striking confirmation today that one suffers an embarrassment of riches in citing examples.

One of the most obvious relates to the nuclear breakthrough. At one stroke the problem of tapping abundant cheap sources of energy was solved. From human muscle power to animal power, then to water, wind, and the fossil fuels, with nuclear power humanity made its biggest advance in the field of energy since the discovery of fire.

The capitalists nevertheless insist on continuing to burn up fossil fuels—while they cautiously consider how nuclear energy can be converted into a new source of profits. At the same time they have turned the development of nuclear energy toward a supremely destructive goal. The stockpile of nuclear weapons is now sufficient to wipe out all the higher forms of life, who knows how many times over? The possibility that this ultimate irrationality can actually occur grows greater with each day the capitalist system continues to endure.

Hardly less striking is the contrast between the Johnson administration wasting \$24 billion to \$30 billion a year in a war of aggression against the tiny country of Vietnam while investing only \$2 billion a year in the "War against Poverty" at home. That the foul and bloody adventure on the mainland of Asia threatens to escalate into an attack on China and still further aggression, until World War III is brought down on our heads, scarcely testifies to the exercise of reason among those in charge of the destinies of American capitalism. They clearly stand in the tradition of the German and Japanese imperialists who shut their eyes on the eve of the previous world war and headed straight toward their own doom.

Aside from such supreme instances of the irrationality of the capitalist system, other examples abound. One that is currently becoming of increasing concern is the pollution of the air, the land, and even the oceans from the anarchistic disposal of

waste products and indiscriminate use of pesticides on an international scale. In our generation alone the number of species of animals reported to be close to extinction, if not already doomed, makes appalling and depressing reading. Their disappearance is not the consequence of any "struggle for survival" as against mankind. This decimation of the animal population is merely one of the by-products of the growing irrationality of the capitalist system, merely one of the many warning signals of what is in store for the human species—and not in the distant future—unless the insanely anarchistic capitalist system is transcended.

Up until 1917, the bourgeois theorists placed heavy stress in proving the alleged fancifulness of Marxism by scoring its "utopianism." The socialists, they maintained, had set up an illusory goal which scarcely warranted serious consideration; for human greed and inequality of native endowments would upset the most idealistically conceived plan, not to mention the little item of who would do the dirty work like sweeping the streets and cleaning the sewers.

Of course, this did not prevent those in charge of political affairs from showing in practice that a certain gap existed between their propaganda about the ineffectiveness of socialism and their real appreciation of the class struggle. It is sufficient to cite the savage reaction of the French rulers to the Paris Commune of 1871, the hanging of the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago in 1886, the witch-hunt in Germany under Bismarck in the 1880's, and the notorious repressive measures of czarism over the years.

Nevertheless the capitalist class came to put considerable credence in its own contention that socialism could be dismissed because of its "utopianism"; hence its surprise that World War I should end with a revolutionary upsurge, the high point of which was the actual establishment of a workers' and farmers' government in Russia.

While the Allies, under Churchill's guidance, sought to smash this government by supporting the Russian counterrevolutionaries and sending in their own troops, they also argued that the Soviet experiment was doomed on the simple grounds that "it won't work."

Besides the alleged incompatibility of socialism and human nature, a standing theme in capitalist propaganda was the incapacity of planned economy to absorb, still less advance, the technological achievements of capitalism. Lack of Russian "know-how" assured the eventual collapse of an economic system based on overall planning.

The ideologists conveniently forgot that the source of technological advance under capitalism was not the capitalists who appropriated its fruits but the workers (including technicians) and the divisions of science most closely associated with production (mechanics, chemistry, electronics, physics).

The "know-how" argument took a staggering blow when the Soviet Union developed first its A-bomb and then the H-bomb. For a period it was maintained that "spies" were responsible; the "secret" had been stolen. This rationalization collapsed when the Soviet Union launched the first space satellite, clearly taking the lead in technology in this field.

Beyond a few belated echoes about U. S. "sophisticated instrumentation" in its satellites and "miniaturization" in nuclear weapons, the argument about an alleged contradiction between economic planning and the development of technology is no longer heard—particularly after China's spectacular development of nuclear weapons.

Still worse for the defenders of the capitalist system is the fact, now clearly established in the minds of the great majority of human beings on this planet, that overall economic planning has demonstrated its superiority in a practical way as the swiftest means by which a backward country can overcome a low cultural and technological level. The capitalists cannot point to a single country in the world where their system has offered results that come anywhere near the achievements of the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China, and Cuba. Let them compare Yugoslavia and Turkey, China and India, or Cuba and Chile! The achievements under economic planning are all the more remarkable since they have occurred not under the most favorable conditions, but in face of enormous handicaps and setbacks such as war and invasion and natural disasters, coupled with the most terrible pressure from capitalism on all fronts.

This is such common knowledge today that in the economically backward countries even the indigenous bourgeoisie, including conscious agents of Western imperialism, are compelled to pose as "socialists" and at least offer lip service to the principle of economic planning, if not considerably more in some instances.

Thus the spokesmen of the capitalist system have had to narrow their arguments. Since the thirties their final defense has been that the supposed irrationality of Marxism or socialism is shown by the absence of democracy in the "socialist countries," the purges and mass murders that took place under

Stalin, the herding of millions into forced labor camps, and all the other abominations that occurred under the late dictator.

The whole argument hinges on (1) taking Marxism and Stalinism as one and the same thing, and (2) maintaining that the atrocities characteristic of Stalinism are inherent in Marxism (or Leninism).

The historical record shows that the capitalist rulers—at least the more intelligent among them—know better. In the great struggle between the Trotskyist Left Opposition and the reactionary tendencies headed by Stalin, these rulers favored Stalin. When it was to the advantage of German imperialism, Hitler signed a pact with Stalin. When it came the turn of American imperialism, Roosevelt even went so far as to prompt Hollywood to make a film presenting Stalin's official version of the monstrous frame-up trials of the thirties.

What is the source of this compatibility between Stalinism and certain capitalist rulers? The bourgeois theorists never go into this question, although it would seem to offer a promising field for research for doctoral theses.

Stalin's own claim to represent the tradition of Marx and Lenin of course facilitated the imperialist objective of presenting the crimes and evils of his regime as inherent in socialism itself rather than monstrous deviations from it.

Up to now, however, the bourgeois thinkers have not taken much interest in providing a truly rational explanation for the rise of Stalinist authoritarianism. In 1944, one of them, Prof. F. A. Hayek, published a book, *The Road to Serfdom*, which became a kind of bible in American management circles (the *New York Times* called it "one of the most important books of our times") because it claimed to expose a basic contradiction in the Marxian "myth." It is fraudulent to visualize a society of abundance, said Hayek. "The reader may take it that whoever talks about potential plenty is either dishonest or does not know what he is talking about." (p. 98.)

Another school of anti-Marxists holds that capitalism—and no other system—has the potential of solving the problem of scarcity and poverty. This school extends from such well-meaning engineers as the late Walter Dorwin Teague to L. B. Johnson with his demagogic "War on Poverty."

Hayek holds that planning leads straight to loss of individual freedom, arbitrary rule, personal dictatorship, slavery, and chaos. As Hayek saw it, "the basic fact" is that it "is impossible for any man to survey more than a limited field, to be aware of the urgency of more than a limited number of needs."

Man's powers of imagination are limited. "This is the fundamental fact on which the whole philosophy of individualism is based." Hayek was not very original. He offered only a variation on the basic sociological argument advanced by Robert Michels in the book he published in 1911, *Political Parties*: the apparatus required by the revolutionary party develops its own interests, which are conservative, and the revolutionary party thus turns into its opposite.

As against the "serfdom" of planned economy, Hayek advanced a program centered around establishing an ideal economy made up of small enterprises, operating according to the laws of free enterprise and free competition. The basic premise on which he argued for this utopia—the incapacity of man's imagination to take into consideration the extremely complex and multitudinous factors embraced in an entire economy—appears quite ridiculous in the light of developments in technology that were only in their infancy or still in the experimental stage when he wrote his book: television, with the enormous speed which it has given to the gathering and exchange of information and opinion, and the electronic computer, the capacities of which in processing data are now common knowledge. These advances, coupled with the virtually limitless resources in energy made available by the development of nuclear energy and what this implies as to the possibilities of an economy of abundance, make Hayek's concept, of going back to the good old days of small business, look like a relic from the horse-and-buggy age.

Hayek, too, made full use of the crimes of Stalinism, equating Stalinism and socialism. In the fashion of the day he also equated socialism, fascism and Nazism, calling them simply variants of "collectivism." With the rehabilitation of the German capitalists, who backed the Nazis, this theory is no longer quite as fashionable as it was in 1944. Nothing better, however, has been produced to replace it since Hayek became the prophet of the American "go-getter" out to make a "fast buck." The standard argument, now reduced to mere repetition, as in the case of Mendel, is the one concerning Stalinism.

It has thus remained to those Marxists, who have genuinely understood Marx's method and sought to apply it, to analyze the rise of Stalinism and offer a rational explanation for it. The main contribution came from Leon Trotsky. He sought the material roots of Stalinism in the society in which it appeared. The Bolshevik Party, good, bad or indifferent, was only one force in the superstructure of early Soviet society. It represented the political interests of the workers; but the work-

ing class itself was far outweighed by the peasant masses both in numbers and in specific weight in the economy. The backwardness of the country, its poverty, the ruin left by the war, the blockade set up by the imperialist powers, the decimation and exhaustion of the revolutionary forces — all these handicaps and obstacles required either time or early and substantial aid from the industrially advanced countries to be overcome. The Bolsheviks were denied both.

Stalin's rise to power becomes explicable once it is seen that he gave up the program of Leninism to enact the role of the political figure best representing the retrogression while still retaining a facade of Bolshevism. The logic of this shift required Stalin to liquidate both the program and the cadres of Bolshevism in order to stabilize and consolidate the position of the usurping bureaucratic caste.

Scientific socialism was thus able to correctly forecast the general alternatives facing Soviet society: either further decline along the spiral of counterrevolution, with the eventual restoration of capitalism; or, with a new upsurge of the revolution, whether nationally or internationally, the breakup of Stalinism and the eventual return to the path of the world revolution.

This dual prognosis has been borne out in the most impressive way. The victory of the Soviet Union over German imperialism in World War II, representing a revolutionary success of historic import, was followed by the toppling of capitalism (if largely by bureaucratic-military means under the Soviet occupation) in Eastern Europe. The world revolution, too, resumed its march, although not along clear programmatic lines. A social revolution in Yugoslavia saved that country from being returned to the orbit of British imperialism. China, the most populous country on earth, broke the grip of both foreign and native capitalism, establishing a new workers' state that is now swiftly rising, whatever the ups and downs, to first-rate standing as a world power. Then little Cuba shook the whole international scene by presenting the world with the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere.

Stalinism itself is now racked with a most profound crisis, clearly portending its doom. The "de-Stalinization" process, marking a policy decided on by the bureaucracy to grant concessions to the masses, aims at gaining time and staving off a definitive settlement of accounts. When the top bureaucrats felt that they had no choice but to give up the cult of Stalin, this concession indicated the strength of the revolutionary pres-

tures that have developed in Soviet society. The Sino-Soviet conflict and shattering of the Stalinist monolith constitute additional symptoms of the erosion of bureaucratic totalitarianism.

Taking the forecasts and the facts of the postwar revolutionary upsurge together with the decline of Stalinism, Marxism-Leninism, as maintained and developed by Trotsky and his followers, has certainly received powerful confirmation. Where, in all the literature of the economic and political "science" of the bourgeoisie—or of Stalin's disciples—is there to be found anything that has withstood the test of events in this fashion? We are not likely to get an audible answer on this score from the defenders of capitalism or of special bureaucratic privileges.

We come now to the final considerations of how well Marxism has stood up in the past fifty years. These involve mainly the capacities of the working class.

The views of Herbert Marcuse, a student of Hegel and Freud as well as Marx, offer a convenient starting point because he speaks for an expanding trend of thought among the new radicals. At a symposium held at the University of Notre Dame in April 1966,* Marcuse was assigned the topic, "The Obsolescence of Marxism." He began his paper by objecting to the title. In his opinion it ought to have included a question mark, inasmuch as Marxism becomes obsolete to the degree that the basic concepts of its theory are validated. "In somewhat plainer English," he states, "the factors which have led to the passing and obsolescence of some decisive concepts of Marx are anticipated in Marxian theory itself as alternatives and tendencies of the capitalist system."

Marcuse maintains that with but one exception the most fundamental notions of Marx's analysis of the capitalist system have been validated factually. The exception is the Marxian concept that the deepest contradictions of capitalism can be broken "only if the laboring classes, who bear the brunt of exploitation, seize the productive apparatus and bring it under the collective control of the producers themselves."

Marcuse maintains that in "the advanced industrial countries where the transition to socialism was to take place, and precisely in those countries, the laboring classes are in no sense a revolutionary potential."

In his opinion they have been corrupted. Enjoying relative prosperity, they feel no vital need for revolution. This includes

*The University of Notre Dame Press has published the papers of the participants in a book entitled *Marx and the Western World*.

not only the trade-union bureaucracy but also the rank and file.

Despite this gloomy view, Marcuse does not give up hope as to the perspectives of socialism. He sees four categories which, taken together, can serve as a substitute: "... first the national liberation movements in the backward countries; secondly, the 'new strategy' labor movement in Europe; thirdly, the underprivileged strata of the population in the affluent society itself; and fourthly, the oppositional intelligentsia." (He also adds the existence of "established Communist societies.")

The possibility of the youth and intelligentsia substituting for the proletariat appears particularly attractive to Marcuse. This social layer appears capable of appreciating a world reality that requires humanity to take the road to socialism. "The development not of class consciousness but of consciousness as such, freed from the distortions imposed upon it, appears to be the basic prerequisite for radical change." To put it in class terms—which Marcuse does not do—the hope for the future in the industrially advanced countries lies with the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and student youth.

This is not a new view; it has a venerable tradition, although Marcuse does supply some new arguments. In essence, however, he stands on factual grounds. The working class has not yet carried out a socialist revolution in the industrially advanced countries. The workers do appear somnolent, particularly in the United States. A sector of the intellectuals and student youth have recently displayed encouraging signs of radicalization.

From this, however, it is hazardous on the part of Marcuse to *substitute* the intellectuals and youth for the working class. Another interpretation would appear at least equally valid; i.e., that the radicalization of the intellectuals and youth *fore-shadows* the radicalization of the working class. It constitutes the beginning of a new process rather than reflecting any alleged inherent characteristics of these social layers as formed by present-day capitalism. In short, the very causes that are arousing the youth and the intellectuals are also operating on the workers, if at a slower rate. The workers are just as inherently capable of exhibiting "consciousness as such" as allied sectors of society—for instance, reaching the conclusion that action is required to save mankind from the threat of a nuclear conflict. This growth in understanding becomes "class" consciousness when it relates to the class position of the workers and particularly to the means they turn to in order to achieve their goals.

In considering whether or not the Marxist view on the revolutionary role of the working class has been verified factually, it would seem in order to take into account the Russian experience—both in 1905 and 1917. Also the great upsurges of the working class elsewhere in the past fifty years. For example, in China in 1925-27; in Spain in 1936-39; in France and Italy and elsewhere in Europe following World War II. The pessimists who hold that the workers lack revolutionary potential fail to consider whether they themselves have not been unduly influenced by the prolonged prosperity in the United States, Western Europe and Japan which was derived first of all from the enormous destruction of World War II, and following this, the preparations for another global conflagration.

The first great new upsurge in any major city in the world will put a finish to this fundamentally anti-Marxist view by confronting an old and outworn empirical fact with a new and opposing one. A faint indication of the potential can be gained from careful study of the opening days of the uprising in Santo Domingo in April 1965.

The workers in that city gave every indication of their readiness for the most audacious action. They may even have succeeded in building a revolutionary party in the very process of moving toward power and of opening another chapter in the process started by the Cubans in the Western Hemisphere had their armed uprising not been artificially terminated by a crushing blow from abroad. It was precisely because of the revolutionary capacities of the working class that the Johnson administration immediately ordered an armed invasion and occupation of the country. As practical rulers, they must go by political realities, not doctrinal preconceptions of astigmatic intellectuals.

The significance of this fact bears stressing. In general, the wholesale disparagement to be found in "New Left" circles about the insurgent capacities of the working class is not shared by the capitalist rulers. This is the explanation for their tough antilabor legislation, their witch-hunts, the assiduousness with which they try to maintain a collaborationist leadership at the head of the trade unions, labor parties, and other organizations of the working class, and their readiness at crucial turning points to give up the parliamentary system and turn to "strong-man" regimes and even fascism.

An extension of this line of reasoning is that, even if the workers succeed in conquering power, they are incapable of retaining it. George Lichtheim, for instance, argues in the sum-

mer 1966 *Partisan Review* that the technocrats constitute a "predestined ruling stratum." Commenting on the U. S. S. R. and the East European countries, he declares: "The attempt to continue 'communism' as such an ideology [an ideology linking the technocratic stratum to the masses] has failed. Communism is historically the ideology of a revolutionary working class. This class having exhausted its mission and been subjected by the technocratic stratum which evolved from the ruling group of the Communist party, the latter employs the traditional vocabulary for the purpose of legitimizing a new form of inequality."

Lichtheim's concepts derive from a not very fresh theory that socialism will give rise not to a classless society but only to a new exploiting class, whether of "managers" or "technocrats," or whatever you want to call them.

One form of this position in vogue during the late thirties and early forties held that a new "managerial" society is advancing all over the world, of which communism, fascism, and New Dealism were but particular variants. Some of the strongest "proofs" of this theory were drawn from fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. With the defeat of these two powers in World War II and the clear evidence that fascism was merely a form of capitalist rule, and a fairly unstable one, a major pillar of the theory collapsed. It survives only in vestigial form in occasional lucubrations like those advanced by Lichtheim. (The origin of his views in the old, discredited theory about the coming wave of a "managerial society" appears clearly from his contention that in "our Western or Atlantic world" there has been "the gradual displacement of bourgeois society by a new social formation. . . .")

The growth of "statism" in the capitalist countries, which was interpreted by theorists like James Burnham to indicate the advance of a society qualitatively different from capitalism, has been noted in Marxist theory since the time of Engels. The increasing intervention of the state in the economy in a series of capitalist countries testifies to the ripeness of the system for socialism. The need for overall controls, for overall planning, has become so imperative that even the capitalist state is forced to engage in it. That it occurs under capitalist auspices, however, entails particularly malevolent forms and pernicious results, the fascist countries providing prime examples of this.

It is a gross error to mix up Soviet planning and even Soviet mismanagement and inequalities with this phenomenon of capitalist decay. The key difference is the continued existence of private property in the means of production in the capitalist states;

its absence in the workers' states. Inequalities in the capitalist countries derive from a class structure required by the functioning of that system whether in depressions or booms. Inequalities in a workers' state like the Soviet Union derive from a system of distribution inherited from the bourgeois past. Since the inequalities are confined to the field of distribution they are not essential to production (they in fact hamper it). Hence they are strictly parasitic in character and can be removed without a social revolution which changes the property forms. The problem belongs to the political level and can be solved with a political revolution which transfers power from the bureaucrats to the working masses.

It is quite true that Stalin destroyed proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union (hence the need for a political overturn to restore that democracy). The reasons for this are much more complex than the simplistic explanation advanced by the various adherents of the "managerial" theory would have us believe; however, as indicated above, it can be stated briefly that the main reason was the poverty and backwardness prevailing in Russia and the fact that a series of *capitalist* (not socialist) tasks still had to be accomplished. When planned economies have been extended to embrace the most industrially advanced countries and to constitute an interlocking whole, the resulting abundance will eliminate the material basis for a parasitic bureaucratic caste. Democracy, freedom, and still more important, the economic and social requisites for the flowering of the human personality will be assured. And, in the final analysis, no other assurance exists that these goals can be achieved.

Another, not unrelated, current argument is that Marx forecast that the socialist revolution would occur where capitalism had developed to its highest peak. But instead of the advanced capitalist countries, the first socialist revolution took place in backward Russia. It is strange that the bourgeois ideologists should imagine that this argument contravenes Marxism since they are compelled to admit that a socialist revolution did occur. It is still stranger that they should think that their contention bolsters *their* "science" in any way whatsoever. First of all, none of them predicted this course of events in advance; secondly, none of them have anything original to say about it even a half century after the event.

But a revolutionary Marxist *did* predict precisely this course of events—some twelve years in advance! Moreover, the total explanation (likewise presented in advance of the occurrence) showed that Marx was completely correct in predicting that

socialism—the international society based on the foundation of the highest achievements of capitalism—will find its primary base in the advanced capitalist countries. The refinement in Marx's theory consisted in noting that the anticapitalist revolution is doubly explosive in those backward countries where a belated bourgeois revolution is telescoped with a proletarian struggle for supremacy and where capitalism in introducing its system also introduces its most modern developments both technologically and ideologically. The scientific socialist to be credited with this advance was, of course, Leon Trotsky with his famous theory of the "permanent revolution."

Thus the Russian Revolution, envisaged in its main lines by Trotsky's theory, explodes the principal contention of the bourgeois propagandists—it proved that Marxism is not a set of inflexible dogmas but a genuine body of science perfectly capable of taking into account new developments in the real world and providing a rational explanation for them.

Still another objection, which has been advanced in some circles, is that the Chinese Revolution took a course different from the one predicted even by Trotsky. In the case of China, peasant armies—not the working class—took the lead in the revolution and did so not under the guidance of a revolutionary-socialist party but under a party strongly tainted with Stalinism.

Again, the argument—coming from adherents of the capitalist system—is singularly bizarre. There was not much about the Chinese Revolution to cause the capitalists to throw their hats in the air. In fact Washington sang quite a dirge about unexpectedly and mysteriously "losing China." Where in their literature is a viable explanation to be found of its occurrence, even seventeen years later?

The victory of the Chinese Revolution proved that international capitalism is weaker and more unstable than even the Trotskyists had judged or dared hope. Capitalism has reached such a point that in a country like China a revolution can win with inadequate leadership! Let the rulers in Wall Street and Washington comfort themselves with that indication as to the real relationship of world forces.

Marxism was certainly not damaged or discredited by the fact that a country of the size and importance of China overturned capitalism and took the road to socialism, however tortuous that road has proved to be. The capacity of Marxism to accept the actual course taken by history shows the distance it stands from being a dogma. The greatest victory since 1917 happened in China and not Western Europe because, among other reasons, Stalin proved strong enough to block a success-

ful proletarian revolution in such countries as Italy and France after the end of World War II, but not in China. These divergent outcomes were determined by the specific conditions of the class struggle itself.

Marxism has never pretended to be able to forecast events with astronomical accuracy. Due to the complexity of the factors involved and the number of indeterminate and unknown elements, Marxism has never undertaken to specify the date in advance on which a revolution would occur or forecast all its peculiarities. Its predictions concern the major tendencies of development and the mobilization of forces under a program that correctly reflects these objective conditions.

If, in their search for material to disprove the validity of Marxism, its bourgeois opponents care to take another example of a specific event that was not predicted either as to date or to form by any Marxist, we willingly offer them the not unimportant example of the Cuban Revolution. More than that, we will state that the appearance of the Cuban leadership in the international political scene foreshadows a similar development in a number of other countries.

If the bourgeois propagandists care to dispute this prediction, the issue can well be left to the test of events. Meanwhile the key political representatives of the American ruling class in both the Democratic and Republican parties, whether of the most reactionary or liberal wings, are proceeding on the assumption that this is exactly what the near future holds in store. That is why they are now staking everything on naked military dictatorships in most of the countries under their control in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and why they are ready, upon receipt of an emergency call, to rush American troops by the tens of thousands wherever a puppet regime appears in danger of going down in face of a mass upsurge like that in the Dominican Republic. How thoroughly convinced the capitalist rulers are about this basic trend can be judged by the course taken by Kennedy and Johnson in Vietnam.

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Scientific socialism can well celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Many of its main forecasts with regard to the revolutionary process have already been borne out, particularly the primary one—that capitalism itself generates its own gravediggers. Whatever the detours, the delays, or the singularities in the world revolution of our time, this conclusion of scientific socialism can scarcely be called a "myth." It is the mightiest reality that the theoreticians and strategists of all classes have to deal with.

14. NECESSITY AND OBJECTIVE ROOTS OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

By Pierre Frank

The concept of proletarian internationalism arose in the very first beginnings of the workers' movement in the first half of the nineteenth century and even preceded the appearance of Marxism. But Marxism gave it a powerful impetus, and for a decade Marx was the driving force in the life of the first viable international organization of the working class.

The International disappeared, but it was reconstructed and, until 1914, its theoretical and political necessity was never challenged. The outbreak of World War I marked the failure of the Second International as a revolutionary rallying point for the world working class. But the victory of the October Revolution gave birth to the Third International, the Communist International; and for some years before succumbing to Stalinism, it bore high the banner of the world socialist revolution.

Today, more than a hundred years after the founding of the First International and fifty years after the triumph of October, there exists no *mass* political international worthy of the name. No one, not even among the leaders of the Socialist parties, takes seriously the organization claiming to be the continuator of the Labor and Socialist International—it is nothing more than a club for occasional harmless discussions.

As for the Communist parties issuing from the Communist International, although they differ among themselves today on some fundamental questions, all of them—from the most right-wing, like the League of Yugoslav Communists, through the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the most left-wing, like the Chinese Communist Party—have nonetheless one point in common: Though they declare themselves to be partisans of proletarian internationalism, they are all equally opposed to any international organization that would unite them in a permanent fashion.

The end of the internationals has not been accompanied by any formal repudiation of proletarian internationalism. The social-democratic leaders have not burdened themselves with any theory to justify keeping up both their "International" and their activities on behalf of their respective bourgeoisies. The Communist parties are at present experiencing serious dissensions in which various interpretations of proletarian internationalism are being touted.

It is therefore not unprofitable to reexamine this concept, its origins, the objective realities on which it is grounded, the factors that have brought about its deformations, and to consider what modifications or additions must be incorporated into it as a result of the new problems confronting the workers' movement. For proletarian internationalism, like any other concept, is not and cannot be an immutable, static idea, outside time and space.

I shall begin with a very brief historical outline of this question, from Marx through World War I and the founding of the Communist International to the degeneration of that organization under Stalin's leadership. We shall see how the subject is today conditioned by the existence of a number of workers' states with bureaucratized leaderships. Taking account of the complexity of the tasks facing the workers' movement at the present time relative to the situation in which it found itself a hundred or even fifty years ago, I will try through this study to bring out a truly revolutionary Marxist conception of proletarian internationalism for our epoch.

I want to stress from the outset, however, that the concept of proletarian internationalism, which is a crucial one, has been blocked or distorted primarily by the intervention of the factor of the nation or, rather, the *nation-state*: first in the form of the bourgeois state, and later in the form of the isolated workers' state in the Soviet Union. In its first form it caused the failure of the Second International; in its latter, along with Stalinism, it led the Third International to ruin, and finally today, with a number of bureaucratically ruled workers' states in existence, it has led, among other things, to an unprecedented aggravation of the Sino-Soviet conflict in the face of American imperialism's shameless escalation in Vietnam.

For true revolutionary Marxists, proletarian internationalism is not a sentimental notion that falls apart at the first sound of rifles, cannon, and bombs. It is a fundamental concept, too often flouted, which has deep objective roots; a concept whose

application the capitalists dread. It is a fundamental concept which must be restored in order to extricate the workers' movement from the bog in which the social-democrats and Stalinists have mired it.

When they first elaborated their theory of historical materialism, Marx and Engels succinctly set forth the historical materialist basis of proletarian internationalism in *The German Ideology*. "Besides, the world-market is presupposed by the mass of propertyless workers—labor-power cut off as a mass from capital or from even a limited satisfaction—and therefore no longer by the mere precariousness of labor, which, not giving an assured livelihood, is often lost through competition. The proletariat can thus only exist *world-historically*, just as communism, its movement, can only have a 'world-historical' existence."¹

The slogan "Workers of the World Unite," with which the *Communist Manifesto* ends, is the logical conclusion which emerges from that imperishable fresco of human history. The development of the productive forces breaking out of the national framework to create the world market is shown there, especially that productive force—the proletariat—whose historical mission is to destroy the capitalist system. The *Manifesto* then points out one special feature of the workers' struggle:

"Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."²

Thus, for the founders of scientific socialism, while the *form* the class struggle takes is primarily national because the proletariat has the problem of winning power in the separate countries, yet the *content* of this struggle is international because its objective, creating a socialist society, is international in character.

Marx felt little need to spell out the theoretical implications of these considerations. The workers' movement of his time, limited not only to a few countries but, even further, to minorities within the working class of each country, was internationalist—instinctively at least, if not out of an advanced theoretical understanding.

When the First International was founded in 1864, Marx, according to his own account, drafted its statutes in a language appropriate to that of the workers' movement of the time, and this is how he expressed himself there on the matter of proletarian internationalism:

"That the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national problem, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries.

"That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements." ³

Marx reaffirmed these same positions in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which was directed against the conceptions of Lassalle, who, for instance, had "conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint."⁴ "Not a word, therefore, *about the international functions* of the German working class!"⁵ Marx wrote of this program, whose professions of internationalism he found "*even infinitely below* that of the Free Trade Party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be 'the international brotherhood of peoples.' But it also *does* something to make trade international . . ."⁶

Let me add as a final point that for Marx and Engels this conception of internationalism, international struggle for socialism, combined dialectically with defense of the then nationally oppressed European nations (Ireland and Poland).

The Second International's betrayal of proletarian internationalism in August 1914 flowed from this organization's opportunist degeneration and that of its sections. The first world war exposed a fundamental feature of reformism: the adaptation of workers' parties in each country to their respective bourgeoisies in the name of a purported common national interest. In the fifteen or so years preceding the outbreak of the war, the Second International carried on two separate major discussions: one on the revisionism espoused by Bernstein; the other having to do with the world war, for which the stage was then being set in the principal capitalist countries of the time. In both cases, these discussions were very sharp, but they remained totally divorced from each other. Thus, many centrists could condemn revisionism while at the same time laying the groundwork for the August 1914 victory of revisionism and social-patriotism in the controversy over the war question. This followed the revisionism debates and stretched

on without the emergence of any clear positions (if you except the amendment to the resolution of the 1907 Stuttgart Congress introduced by Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin).

In defending revolutionary Marxism throughout the first world war, Lenin, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg reaffirmed the fundamentally international character of the class struggle and the necessity of putting proletarian internationalism above all else in order to prevent any recurrence of the betrayal of August 2, 1914. Whatever small differences, and even major ones (in particular, in Rosa Luxemburg's case, over the legitimacy of the struggle of certain peoples for their national independence), there were between them at the time, they all declared themselves for reconstructing an international in which so-called national interests would be subordinated to the needs of the world revolution and where any tendency that might encourage social-patriotism would be rooted out. The Third International, the Communist International, when it was constituted in March 1919, reasserted these principles and incorporated them into its statutes and principal resolutions.

With the victory of the October Revolution, the question of proletarian internationalism took on a new dimension and thereby much greater complexity. Hitherto, proletarian internationalism had meant the international solidarity of the workers' movement with any mass struggle in any country, as well as a joint struggle of all workers against the contending bourgeois governments engaged in an imperialist war. Henceforth was added the principle of defending a state in which the working class had just taken power. Moreover, it is indicated that the policy of this state and the masses in this state toward the struggles of the masses in the rest of the world should be conducted in conformity with the principles of proletarian internationalism.

In the first years of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, these new tasks evoked no theoretical or political difficulties. The workers of the world mobilized against the imperialist interventions on Soviet territory. The Soviet regime and the Communist International, while practicing a certain separation of tasks, supported all the revolutionary assaults on capitalist rule taking place throughout the world.

But in the wake of the political and social setbacks which led to the bureaucracy's rise to power in the Soviet Union following 1922-23, new conceptions made their appearance. These introduced a distortion of proletarian internationalism

and, moreover, perverted the policy of the Communist International and its sections. The theory with which the entire domestic and international policy of the Soviet Union has since been bound up, that is, the theory of "building socialism in one country," automatically introduced an absolute dichotomy between the development of the Soviet Union and the advance of the revolution in the rest of the world; for, according to this theory, socialism could be built in the USSR whatever happened in other countries.

Stalin, it is true, introduced a major qualification into this view: the threat of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union. But theoretical speculation had nothing to do with this. Since the theory of socialism in one country expressed the interests of a conservative bureaucratic stratum with a nationally limited outlook, it could not fail to have political consequences for the paramount question of war against the USSR. Defense of the USSR in isolation from revolutionary developments in the rest of the world became a prime element in the policy of the Communist International and its sections. From there it was only a short step—and one quickly taken—to subordinating the policies of these organizations to the needs of defending the Soviet Union as conceived by the Kremlin.

Thus the organizations in the service of Stalinism did not base their policies on the objective course of the struggles of the masses of the world. For the Kremlin, the Soviet Union's future no longer depended on the world revolution but on maintaining the *status quo* in international relations. But revolutions upset the *status quo*. So more than one mass revolutionary movement was sacrificed or abandoned to suit the needs of Kremlin diplomacy. The story is a long one, starting with the German revolution of 1923 and the second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27.

Today this line is expressed, allowing for the new circumstances and relationship of power in the post-World War II period, in the Soviet Union's limited support to Vietnam, where its objective is not victory for the Vietnamese revolution but merely a *modus vivendi* with imperialism which would permit purely economic competition between the USSR and the United States within the framework of peaceful coexistence.

In making their prime task the defense of the USSR separate and apart from the struggle for the victory of the revolution throughout the world, the Stalinists have taken up in a new

form an argument adduced by the German social-democrats prior to 1914 and during the first world war: The existing working-class organizations must not be endangered.

In his efforts to justify this policy, Stalin, trapped by his concept of "socialism in one country," was led to give a theoretical interpretation of proletarian internationalism which in reality amounted to support of "national socialism."

To present the clearest possible explanation of this question, I need only cite a long passage from a polemic by Trotsky on this subject. In his preface to the German edition of *The Permanent Revolution* (March 1930), he cites a passage from a speech delivered by Stalin on May 6, 1929, dealing with the internal problems of the Communist Party of the United States: "'It would be wrong,' says Stalin, arguing against one of the American factions, 'to ignore the specific peculiarities of American capitalism. The Communist Party must take them into account in its work. But it would be still more wrong to base the activities of the Communist Party on these specific features, since the foundation of the activities of every Communist Party, including the American Communist Party, on which it must base itself, must be the *general features* of capitalism, which are the *same for all countries*, and not its specific features in any given country. *It is precisely on this that the internationalism of the Communist parties rests.* The specific features are merely *supplementary* to the general features.'" (*Bolshevik*, No. 1, 1930, p. 8. Our emphasis.)"⁷

And Trotsky comments thus:

"These lines leave nothing to be desired in the way of clarity. Under the guise of providing an economic justification for internationalism, Stalin in reality presents a justification for national socialism. It is false that world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are 'merely supplementary to the general features,' like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years. Suffice it to recall that the proletariat of a backward country has come to power many years before the proletariat of the advanced countries. This historic lesson alone shows that in spite of Stalin, it is absolutely wrong to base the activity of the Communist parties on some 'general features,' that is, on an abstract type of national capitalism. It is utterly

false to contend that 'this is what the internationalism of the Communist parties rests upon.' In reality, it rests on the insolvency of the national state, which has long ago outlived itself and which has turned into a brake upon the development of the productive forces. National capitalism cannot be even understood, let alone reconstructed, except as a part of world economy.

"The economic peculiarities of different countries are in no way of a subordinate character. It is enough to compare England and India, the United States and Brazil. But the specific features of national economy, no matter how great, enter as component parts and in increasing measure into the higher reality which is called world economy and on which alone, in the last analysis, the internationalism of the Communist parties rests.

"Stalin's characterization of national peculiarities as a simple 'supplement' to the general type, is in crying and therewith not accidental contradiction to Stalin's understanding (that is, his lack of understanding) of the law of uneven development of capitalism. This law, as is well known, is proclaimed by Stalin as the most fundamental, most important and universal of laws. With the help of the law of uneven development, which he has converted into an empty abstraction, Stalin tries to solve all the riddles of existence. But the astonishing thing is that he does not notice that *national peculiarity is nothing else but the most general product of the unevenness of historical development, its summary result, so to say*. It is only necessary to understand this unevenness correctly, to consider it in its full extent, and also to extend it to the pre-capitalist past. A faster or slower development of the productive forces; the expanded, or contrariwise, the contracted character of entire historical epochs—for example, the Middle Ages, the guild system, enlightened absolutism, parliamentarism; the uneven development of different branches of economy, different classes, different social institutions, different fields of culture—all these lie at the base of these national 'peculiarities.' The peculiarity of a national social type is the crystallization of the unevenness of its formation

"By making a fetish of the law of uneven development, Stalin proclaims it a sufficient basis for national socialism, not as a type common to all countries, but exceptional, Messianic, purely Russian. It is possible, according to Stalin, to construct a self-

sufficient socialist society only in Russia. By this alone he elevates Russia's national peculiarities not only above the 'general features' of every capitalist nation, but also above world economy as a whole. It is just here that the fatal flaw in Stalin's whole conception begins. The peculiarity of the U.S.S.R. is so potent that it makes possible the construction of its own socialism within its own borders, regardless of what happens to the rest of mankind. As regards other countries, to which the Messianic seal has not been affixed, their peculiarities are merely 'supplementary' to the general features, only a wart on the face. 'It would be wrong,' teaches Stalin, 'to base the activities of the Communist parties on these specific features.'"⁸

I will complement this long quotation with another paragraph from the same preface. In it, Trotsky, in opposing the autarchic conception of the Soviet economy that dominated the elaboration of the five-year plans in Stalin's time, outlines a line of action affording a means of answering the questions being posed at present by the existence of a number of workers' states.

"A realistic programme for an isolated workers' state cannot set itself the goal of achieving 'independence' from world economy, much less of constructing a national socialist society 'in the shortest time.' The task is not to attain the abstract maximum tempo, but the optimum tempo, that is, the best, that which follows from both internal and world economic conditions, strengthens the position of the proletariat, prepares the national elements of the future international socialist society, and at the same time, and above all, systematically improves the living standards of the proletariat and strengthens its alliance with the non-exploiting masses of the countryside. This prospect must remain in force for the whole preparatory period, that is, until the victorious revolution in the advanced countries liberates the Soviet Union from its present isolated position."⁹

This situation of an isolated workers' state of exceptional features alongside capitalist states in which the Communist parties were to base their activities on the "general features" of capitalism, and Stalin's policy so defined for it, no longer fitted the conditions which followed World War II. Despite the fact that Stalinist policy at the end of the war successfully blocked the triumph of the revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe and other countries such as Greece, new workers' states were formed independently of that policy and sometimes in

opposition to it. In addition, the revolution in the colonial and semicolonial countries developed in tempestuous fashion. The question of proletarian internationalism thus had to take account of new factors, such as the existence of several workers' states and of new revolutionary movements, which, while opposed to imperialism, were not workers' movements in the strict sense.

The objective situation became extremely complex. This complexity was heightened by the conceptions of the bureaucratic leaderships of the mass movements and the policies they followed. It was obviously natural for the leaderships in the colonial and semicolonial countries to give strong stress to the *national* side of their struggle, whose international aspect lay in worldwide solidarity against imperialism—a solidarity which often waned after the achieving of independence, especially when the revolution did not go over into a socialist stage. The evolution of the Afro-Asian Congress founded at Bandung testifies to this.

But matters appeared in a scarcely better light for those movements claiming to be socialist. There is hardly any need to mention that the Socialist parties—whose influence is confined to the old capitalist countries—have not moved a muscle to free themselves from the bonds that tie them to their respective bourgeoisies—quite the contrary. It is due to the Communist leaderships that the question has taken on so extremely complex a character.

For them the question could no longer be one of defending an isolated workers' state. An attempt was made to replace this idea with the concept of a "socialist camp" of workers' states. But several factors intervened to upset things. First of all, in the wake of the war Stalin indulged in a policy of pillaging the territories occupied by the Soviet armies, a policy modified only secondarily among the countries involved, even if they fell into the "socialist camp." After the pillage ended, he established "normal" trade relations between states. But these were at world prices, which meant that in commercial relations among the workers' states, just as among capitalist countries, those more developed economically absorbed part of the surplus of the less-developed. The Yugoslav leadership was the first to expose this fact, and it denounced the Soviet abuses in the mixed trading companies as well. Since that time other workers' states have also complained about this

situation as well as about other circumstances disadvantageous for them, which Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) and the trade treaties between the USSR and the various workers' states have not yet satisfactorily remedied.

Moreover, there was more to this than the mere automatic play of market relations among states. The deliberate policy of the Soviet government held some upsetting surprises in store for the leaders of the other workers' states. Breaking trade relations and withdrawing Soviet technicians, as a means of pressure to blackmail leaders expressing serious differences, was resorted to both by Stalin against Yugoslavia and by Khrushchev against China. In the case of China, this economic sabotage was accompanied by the breaking of a technical-aid agreement for developing a nuclear industry, and the Soviet leaders' silence as to how they would view an American aggression against China probably nurtures the Chinese leaders' present suspicions of them. One also recalls Fidel Castro's observations (to use a mild word) on the subject of Khrushchev's action in unilaterally deciding to withdraw the missiles on terms Castro rejected because they constituted an infringement of Cuban sovereignty. And, finally, in Comecon, Rumania has resisted the imposition of certain goals on its planning in the name of a "division of labor" which benefited the already more industrialized countries to the detriment of those less developed.

Since the party and the state are fused in all the workers' states, economic, political, or strategic conflicts among these states extend into differences between the leading parties, and vice versa. The most striking example is the Sino-Soviet conflict, which has culminated in a major break.

These differences are not confined to the parties of the workers' states alone; international monolithism is no more. Thus, for years the Italian Communist Party and the French Communist Party have diverged sharply in their respective political lines. Other parties have taken their distance on certain questions or in their relations with one or another party or group of parties.

Although international monolithism is gone, the leaderships of the Communist parties are intent on maintaining monolithism on the national scale. This is really a consequence in their hyperbureaucratized organizations of the theory of "socialism in one country." Even the leadership of the Italian Communist Party—obliged by the force of circumstances to display more liberalism than any other Communist Party leadership—does

not hesitate to resort to the most bureaucratic methods to prevent any slightly organized expression of divergent views. In no Communist Party is there an honest confrontation of political differences. These are settled in closed-door discussions at the top and then, if need be, taken to the ranks by the winning group in the manner which suits it—usually with distortions of the losers' positions—only for formal approval.

Such is the present state of the official Communist movement and of the relations among the Communist parties. It is very reminiscent of diplomatic relations among states, regardless of the social regimes they represent. The disadvantages of this situation are apparent to the leaders of the Communist parties. Togliatti went looking for a solution and for years—even in his "testament" written the day before he died—proposed the concept of "polycentrism," that is, establishing a few international centers corresponding to the world's major sectors. But this idea did not get a very favorable response.

The proposed new conference of the parties, which, unlike those of 1957 and 1961 where the differences were camouflaged by a unanimous resolution, would take a stand against the Chinese Communist Party, is running into resistance both from leaderships with a right-wing policy and those following a left-wing policy.

Although they differ on very important questions, as the Sino-Soviet dispute shows, all the Communist parties, as I have pointed out, are nonetheless unanimous on one single point: There is no need for an International as it existed from 1919 to 1943. The Communist leaders obviously confuse the Communist International as it existed up until 1922-23 under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky with what it became under Stalin's leadership. They regard an international organization as not only useless, but even an impediment. No argument has been offered to sustain such a view. At the very most one finds a new version or a paraphrase of the resolution that proclaimed the Communist International's dissolution: After having assisted in the formation of Communist parties capable of fulfilling their role, its further existence became an encumbrance.

There was no objection at that time, and there is none today, because this rejection of an international is not based on theory but on certain pragmatic needs—those of the Kremlin in 1943, those of the various leaderships at the present time. In the workers' states, these leaderships represent the interests of the bureaucratic strata which must establish an equilibrium in their relationships with the worker and peasant masses of their

countries. In other countries, while the Communist leaderships credit Soviet economic development with a decisive role in assuring the advance to socialism, they aspire to power through political combinations with reformist and bourgeois parties. Thus, they are intent on reassuring these parties of their "national" character and anxious to repudiate everything that might compromise them in this respect in the eyes of their much-sought-after allies and recall their former subservience to the Kremlin.

Stalin's successors are reluctant to formulate a theory in keeping with their practices; they prefer to resort to general formulas denying "the fable that the USSR lays claim to the role of 'hegemon,' the leader in the Socialist camp." (*Principles of Marxism-Leninism*, a manual published in Moscow in 1961 under the supervision of the CPSU leadership.)¹⁰ At that time, according to this manual, this "fable" was "circulated from Belgrade." A new edition today would have to mention that this accusation applies equally to Peking, Bucharest, Tirana, and Havana—and the list is getting longer. However, while denying the facts, this same manual sets forth the basis of Soviet thinking in these terms:

"In the communist movement there are no 'superior' and 'subordinated' parties at all, just as there are no 'hegemon' states or 'satellite' states in the socialist camp. All the socialist countries are fully independent in solving their national problems and each one has an equal voice in solving the common problems of the socialist camp. Similarly the Communist and Workers' Parties of these countries are fully *independent and equal*; they are responsible to the working people of their country and the entire world working-class movement, and not to the party of any one country."¹¹

In other words, what we have are parties and states by right *free and equal*. But what if there are disputes among them? The manual explains in another chapter that this can only be the work of the "bourgeoisie and the exponents of its ideology in the working-class movement . . .

"The unity of the parties is not something in existence for once and for all. It develops and strengthens in the struggle, undergoing bitter attacks from the bourgeoisie and their exponents in the working-class movement. International reaction has often sought to weaken the Communist Parties by ideological subversion."¹²

Stalin's mode of thinking, we see, has not completely disap-

peared in Moscow. Although some documents by Lenin that were banned during Stalin's lifetime have been printed, they remain a dead letter for the Kremlin bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, Lenin found "the formal equality" of nations insufficient as the basis for a truly proletarian attitude. In his letter on the question of nationalities, which was directed primarily against Stalin's policy in this domain in 1922, he writes:

"That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as Derzhimordas),¹³ must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

"What is important to a proletarian? To the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, suspicion and insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation has subjected them in the past.

"I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviks, to Communists in greater detail. And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is neglectful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialism' (whereas he himself is a real and true 'nationalist-socialist,' and even a vulgar Great-Russian Derzhimorda), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity . . .

"That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific

attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation toward the oppressor (or great) nation."¹⁴

Caution, thoughtfulness, readiness to compromise—the Georgian whom Lenin had in mind could not understand these words, and neither can the bureaucrats brought up in the school of that Georgian; the example of "socialist mutual aid" which they give (p. 774) in the manual mentioned above is the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary! But Lenin was a Marxist who hated cops and recognized them even in the guise of Soviet bureaucrats; moreover, he knew, according to the Marxist school, that formal equality was a legal notion, "a law based on inequality like all law" (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*). In the capitalist world, as everyone knows, all men have "equal rights" to sleep in the Ritz Hotel or under bridges. In the United Nations all countries are formally equal. According to Stalin and his school (if this term may be used to designate the Soviet bureaucracy and its lackeys), the Soviet Union, China, Rumania and Cuba likewise have "equal rights in the socialist camp"—for example, to cut off their economic aid, to pull out their technicians, not to speak of producing or possessing nuclear weapons. "Internationalism" on such a basis could not help but create the present antagonisms among the workers' states and the Communist parties and can do nothing but exacerbate them.

What are the tasks and problems arising out of proletarian internationalism which stem from the world's economic and political unity? They can be set forth as follows:

a) the needs of the class struggle in the capitalist world, which have been bound up with the problems and tasks of the workers' movement from its origins, in the face of international capitalist combinations, capitalist competition, and the cyclical ups and downs of the capitalist economy;

b) the needs arising from the threat of war among the capitalist nations;

c) the objective need to support the struggles of the colonial and semicolonial peoples to liberate themselves from imperialism and capitalism, including national capitalism;

d) the need to defend the workers' states against imperialist threats and aggressions;

e) the need to carry forward the building of socialism, already undertaken in one-third of the world, on an international scale, and to do this first of all on the economic level in order to reduce the costs of establishing the infrastructure.

To these must be added, moreover, even more far-reaching or longer-term objectives: problems, for example, in the utilization of rare or limited raw materials, population development, putting the advances in space research to rational use, etc., and, finally, the needs of building a worldwide communist society.

The most cursory inspection shows that it is not easy to go from a general statement of these tasks to their precise and detailed definition, even assuming the absence of bureaucratic leaderships in the workers' states and in the revolutionary workers' movement—which is still far off. At the national level alone, any militant knows how difficult it often is to determine what sort of support to give to a simple strike (financial solidarity, work stoppages, extension of the movement, etc.) in view of the union's situation and authority in the given plants. The difficulties which confront one are still greater in the case of mass movements with important international political ramifications. The Soviet leaders are subject to criticism for their duplicity, their line of seeking an illusory global accord with American imperialism at the expense of the Vietnamese revolution, which it aids only in a limited way in pursuance of that unworthy objective. But this criticism does not imply that we would ask a revolutionary leadership to plunge headlong into the adventure of a nuclear war.

In the matter of economic aid to countries that have overthrown capitalism and are building socialism, whatever manifestly stems from a bureaucratic outlook is to be condemned (the meagerness of this aid in comparison to that accorded certain capitalist states, attaching charges to this aid, using this aid for purposes of political blackmail, etc.). This said, certain problems would not be eliminated with the disappearance of bureaucratic leaderships. For instance, it is patently impossible to ask the Soviet people, who have gone through long years of sacrifice and privation made worse by bureaucratic and terroristic economic management, to give up possible improvements in their lot here and now in the interests of greatly stepping up their aid to much less developed countries.

A number of problems would be more easily resolvable if capitalism had been overthrown in the economically highly developed countries. Aid to the still underdeveloped countries, for instance, could be increased without lowering the standard of living of the workers in the economically developed countries, and all growth rates could be increased far beyond what they are today. But this is the music of the future, which, while

not in the realm of dreams, is not just around the corner.

For the present, the solution of the objective international tasks has been complicated by the fact that the world revolution is following a course unforeseen by the Bolsheviks in 1917—from the capitalist world's underdeveloped periphery in toward the central capitalist countries, rather than outward from them to the less developed countries; the solution is also complicated by the existence of bureaucratic leaderships benefited by this situation. This state of affairs must then serve as the starting point for determining the international tasks and how to solve them. The accumulated experience of half a century has confirmed in real life what theory had indicated, namely, that it is impossible to set an international line of action based on national realities alone. On the contrary, only by formulating a line of action derived from a general world analysis at each major turning point of the world situation can a revolutionary policy and the tasks appropriate for particular national conditions be determined.

Taking into account the Marxist concept of the unity of thought and action, an overall analysis and an international policy can be produced only by an international organization of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard. And such an organization must be both independent of any state and linked through the activity of its members to the struggles of the masses in the colonial and semicolonial countries, to the struggles of the masses in the economically developed capitalist countries, and to the struggles in the workers' states against the apparatuses and bureaucracies in power.

There can obviously be no thought of setting up a new edition of the Communist International in the form to which Stalin reduced it. What is indicated is the return on a higher level to the experience of the Communist International as it was in its first years under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. This experience fills one of the most magnificent pages in the history of the workers' movement and inspired a fear still prevalent in the capitalist world; it cannot be effaced by what bureaucratic degeneration did to it.

Even in the degenerated form to which he brought the Communist International, Stalin felt the need to dissolve it, giving the false pretext that it had fulfilled its function in creating national Communist parties capable of managing their own affairs. These parties, as we know, now find themselves in a crisis of unparalleled magnitude. We see them torn between the

need for unified international action and the need of adapting themselves to national conditions; moreover, they do not view these needs in their relationship to the fundamental historical interests of the proletariat.

It was this contradiction that brought on the failure of the Communist Information Bureau about a year after its founding in connection with the crisis between the USSR and Yugoslavia. This contradiction was also at the root of the inability of the 1957 and 1960 World Congresses to get any further than general formulas susceptible of varying interpretations, and of the current difficulties in calling a new conference in face of the categorical opposition of the Chinese and others.

It also explains the contradictory aftermath of the Tricontinental Congress of 1966 in Havana. The Cuban sponsors of this congress seriously sought to establish a united front of the Asian, African, and Latin-American movements. But this, on the one hand, ran up against the—to say the least—ambiguous line of the Soviet government on the Vietnam War and, on the other, against the refusal of the majority of the Communist parties of Latin America to exchange an opportunist line for a revolutionary one.

The objective need of an international revolutionary organization to set forth a worldwide orientation, to which the Bolsheviks gave recognition fifty years ago in the form of the Communist International, has never ceased to be the central concern of the Trotskyist movement from the moment it became clear that the concept of "socialism in one country" bore within itself the germ of destruction of the Communist movement's international unity.

When the Communist International's political finish was consummated by Hitler's unresisted seizure of power and its actual end was in sight, the Trotskyist movement resolved that it was necessary to found a Fourth International. It realized that the organization thus founded could only be, for an entire period, a numerically weak, cadre organization. But its creation was imperiously demanded to keep the concept of a revolutionary Marxist international alive in reality, and not just in books. It was a necessity to permit revolutionary Marxists, anxious to carry forward the struggle, to develop an international course of action, at least at theoretical and political levels, and to work for the creation of the future mass revolutionary Marxist international and its national sections.

NOTES

1. *The German Ideology. Parts I and II*. International Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 26.
2. *The Communist Manifesto*, Charles H. Kerr & Company, Chicago, 1947, p. 29.
3. *The Founding of the First International: A Documentary Record*. International Publishers, New York, 1937, pp. 39-40.
4. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. International Publishers, New York, 1938, p. 12.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
6. *Ibid.*
7. "Introduction to the German Edition," *Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1965, p. 23.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
10. O. Kuusinen, ed., *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*. Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1961, p. 775.
11. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
13. Derzhimorda means "Shut your trap!" in Russian. It was the name of a brutal, oafish policeman in Gogol's famous play, *The Inspector General*.
14. *Lenin's Last Letters and Articles*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, undated, pp. 19-20.

15. THE VANGUARD PARTY AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

By James P. Cannon

The greatest contribution to the arsenal of Marxism since the death of Engels in 1895 was Lenin's conception of the vanguard party as the organizer and director of the proletarian revolution. That celebrated theory of organization was not, as some contend, simply a product of the special Russian conditions of his time and restricted to them. It is deep-rooted in two of the weightiest realities of the twentieth century: the *actuality* of the workers' struggle for the conquest of power, and the *necessity* of creating a leadership capable of carrying it through to the end.

Recognizing that our epoch was characterized by imperialist wars, proletarian revolutions, and colonial uprisings, Lenin deliberately set out at the beginning of this century to form a party able to turn such cataclysmic events to the advantage of socialism. The triumph of the Bolsheviks in the upheavals of 1917, and the durability of the Soviet Union they established, attested to Lenin's foresight and the merits of his methods of organization. His party stands out as the unsurpassed prototype of what a democratic and centralized leadership of the workers, true to Marxist principles and applying them with courage and skill, can be and do.

Limited as it was to a single country, the epoch-making achievement of the Bolsheviks did not conclusively dispose of further dispute over the nature of the revolutionary leadership. That controversy has continued ever since. Fifty years afterwards there is no lack of skeptics inside the socialist ranks who doubt or deny that a party of the Leninist type is either necessary or desirable. And even where Lenin's theory is clearly understood and convincing, the problem of the vanguard party remains as urgent as ever, since it has yet to be solved in the everyday struggle against the old order.

A correct appreciation of the vanguard party and its indispensable role depends upon understanding the crucial importance of the subjective factors in the proletarian revolution. On a broad historical scale, and in the final accounting, economic conditions are decisive in shaping the development of society. This truth of historical materialism does not negate

the fact that the political and psychological processes unfolding within the working masses more directly and immediately affect the course, the pace, and the outcome of the national and world revolution. Once the objective material preconditions for revolutionary activity by the workers have reached a certain point of maturity, their will and consciousness, expressed through the intervention of the organized vanguard, can become the key component in determining the outcome of the class struggle.

The Leninist theory of the vanguard party is based on two factors: the heterogeneity of the working class and the exceptionally conscious character of the movement for socialism. The revolutionizing of the proletariat and oppressed people in general is a complex, prolonged, and contradictory affair. Under class society and capitalism, the toilers are stratified and divided in many ways; they live under very dissimilar conditions and are at disparate stages of economic and political development. Their culture is inadequate and their outlook narrow. Consequently they do not and cannot all at once, en masse and to the same degree, arrive at a clear and comprehensive understanding of their real position in society or the political course they must follow to end the evils they suffer from and make their way to a better system. Still less can they learn quickly and easily how to act most effectively to protect and promote their class interests.

This irregular self-determination of the class as a whole is the primary cause for a vanguard party. It has to be constituted by those elements of the class and their spokesmen who grasp the requirements for revolutionary action and proceed to their implementation sooner than the bulk of the proletariat on both a national and international scale. Here also is the basic reason that the vanguard always begins as a minority of its class, a "splinter group." The earliest formations of advanced workers committed to socialism, and their intellectual associates propagating its views, must first organize themselves around a definite body of scientific doctrine, class tradition, and experience, and work out a correct political program in order then to organize and lead the big battalions of revolutionary forces.

The vanguard party should aim at all times to reach, move, and win the broadest masses. Yet, beginning with Lenin's Bolsheviks, no such party has ever started out with the backing of the majority of the class and as its recognized head. It originates, as a rule, as a group of propagandists concerned with the elaboration and dissemination of ideas. It trains, teaches,

and tempers cadres around that program and outlook which they take to the masses for consideration, adoption, action, and verification.

The size and influence of their organization is never a matter of indifference to serious revolutionists. Nonetheless, *quantitative* indices alone cannot be taken as the decisive determinants for judging the real nature of a revolutionary grouping. More fundamental are such qualitative features as the program and relationship with the class whose interests it formulates, represents, and fights for.

"The interests of the class cannot be formulated otherwise than in the shape of a program; the program cannot be defended otherwise than by creating the party," wrote Trotsky in *What Next?* "The class, taken by itself, is only raw material for exploitation. The proletariat acquires an independent role only at that moment when, from a social class *in itself*, it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious."

Marxism teaches that the revolution against capitalism and the socialist reconstruction of the old world can be accomplished only through conscious, collective action by the workers themselves. The vanguard party is the highest expression and irreplaceable instrument of that class consciousness at all stages of the world revolutionary process. In the prerevolutionary period the vanguard assembles and welds together the cadres who march ahead of the main army but seek at all points to maintain correct relations with it. The vanguard grows in numbers and influence and comes to the fore in the course of the mass struggle for supremacy which it aspires to bring to a successful conclusion. After the overthrow of the old ruling powers, the vanguard leads the people in the tasks of defending and constructing the new society.

A political organization capable of handling such colossal tasks cannot arise spontaneously or haphazardly; *it has to be continuously, consistently, and consciously built*. It is not only foolish but fatal to take a lackadaisical attitude toward party-building or its problems. The bitter experiences of so many revolutionary opportunities aborted, mismanaged, and ruined over the past half century by inadequate or treacherous leaderships has incontestably demonstrated that nonchalance in this vital area is a sure formula for disorientation and defeat.

Lenin's superb capacities as a revolutionary leader were best shown in his insistence upon the utmost consciousness in all

aspects of party-building, from capital issues of theory and policy to the meticulous attention given to small details of daily work. Other parties and kinds of parties are content to amble and stumble along, dealing empirically and in a makeshift manner with problems as they arise. Lenin introduced system and planning into the construction and activity of the revolutionary party on the road to power, not only into the economy such a party was later called upon to direct. He left as little as possible to chance and improvisation. Proceeding from a formulated appraisal of the given stage of the struggle, he singled out the main tasks at hand and sought to discover and devise the best ways and means of solving them in accord with the long-range goals of world socialism.

The vanguard party, guided by the methods of scientific socialism and totally dedicated to the welfare of the toiling masses and all victims of oppression, must always be in principled opposition to the guardians and institutions of class society. These traits can immunize it against the infections, and armor it against the pressures, of alien class influences. But the Leninist party must be, above all, a *combat* party intent on organizing the masses for effective action leading to the taking of power.

That overriding aim determines the character of the party and priority of its tasks. It cannot be a talking shop for aimless and endless debate. The purpose of its deliberations, discussions, and internal disputes is to arrive at decisions for action and systematic work. Neither can it be an infirmary for the care and cure of sick souls, nor itself a model of the future socialist society. It is a band of revolutionary fighters, ready, willing, and able to meet and defeat all enemies of the people and assist the masses in clearing the way to the new world.

Much of the New Left, imbued with an anarchistic or existentialist spirit, denigrate or dismiss professional leadership in a revolutionary movement. So do some disillusioned workers and ex-radicals, who have come to equate conscientious dedication to full-time leadership with bureaucratic domination and privilege. They fail to understand the interrelations between the masses, the revolutionary class, the party, and its leadership. Just as the revolutionary class leads the nation forward, so the vanguard party leads the class. However, the role of leadership does not stop there. The party itself needs leadership. It is impossible for a revolutionary party to provide correct leadership without the right sort of leaders. This leadership performs the same functions within the vanguard party as that party does for the working class.

Its cadres remain the backbone of the party, in periods of

contraction as well as expansion. The vitality of such a party is certified by the capacity to extend and replenish its cadres and reproduce qualified leaders from one generation to another.

The vanguard party cannot be proclaimed by sectarian fiat or be created overnight. Its leadership and membership are selected and sifted out by tests and trials in the mass movement, and in the internal controversies and sharp conflicts over the critical policy questions raised at every turn in the class struggle. It is not possible to step over, and even less possible to leap over, the preliminary stage in which the basic cadres of the party organize and reorganize themselves in preparation for, and in connection with, the larger job of organizing and winning over broad sections of the masses.

The decisive role that kind of party can play in the making of history was dramatically exemplified by the Bolshevik cadres in the first world war and the first proletarian revolution. These cadres degenerated or were destroyed and replaced after Lenin's death by the totalitarian apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy fashioned under Stalin. The importance of such cadres was negatively confirmed by the terrible defeats of the socialist forces in other countries, extending from the Germany of 1918 to the Spain of 1936-1939, because of the opportunism, defects, or defaults of the labor leaderships.

Contrary to the opinions of some other students of his remarkable career, I believe that Trotsky's most valuable contribution to the world revolutionary movement in the struggle against Stalinism and centrism was his defense and enrichment of the Leninist principles of the party, culminating in the decision to create new parties of the Fourth International along these lines. Trotsky was from 1903 to 1917 opposed in theory and practice to Lenin's methods of building a revolutionary party. It is a tribute to his exemplary objectivity and capacity for growth that he wholeheartedly came over to Lenin's conceptions in 1917, when he saw them verified by the developments of the revolution at home and abroad.

From that point to his last day Trotsky never for a moment wavered in his adherence to these methods of party-building. After correcting his mistake in that department, he became, after Lenin's death in 1924, the foremost exponent and developer of the Bolshevik traditions of the vanguard party in national and international politics.

Most people think that Trotsky's genius was best displayed in his work as theorist of the permanent revolution, as the head of the October uprising, or as creator and commander of the

Red Army. I believe that he exercised his powers of revolutionary Marxist leadership most eminently not during the rise but during the recession of the Russian and world revolutions, when, as leader of the Left Opposition, he undertook to save the program and perspectives of the Bolshevik Party against the Stalinist reaction, and then founded the Fourth International once the Comintern had decisively disclosed its bankruptcy in 1933. The purpose of the new International was to create and coordinate new revolutionary mass parties of the world working class.

Trotsky summarized his views on the momentous importance of the vanguard party in the transitional program he drafted for its founding congress in 1938. He asserted that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." The principal strategic task for our whole epoch is "overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation)."

He pointed out that the vanguard party was the sole agency by which this burning political problem of the imperialist phase of world capitalism could be solved. More specifically, he stated categorically: "... the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International," the World Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Have the major experiences in the struggle for socialism, since this was written, spoken for or against Trotsky's pregnant political generalizations? Has the crisis of mankind, or the crisis of the proletarian leadership, been overcome?

The fact is it has grown ever deeper and more acute with the advent of nuclear weapons and the failures of the established parties to overthrow capitalist imperialism and promote the progress of socialism.

In the revolutionary resurgence in Western Europe opened by Mussolini's deposition in July 1943, which signaled the eclipse of fascism, to the ousting of the Communists from the coalition cabinets in France and Italy in 1947, the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties repeated their previous treachery and impotence by refusing to pursue a revolutionary policy directed toward the conquest of power in a highly revolutionary situation. These defaults and defeats permitted capitalism to be restabilized in the second most important sector of that system.

In the colonial countries from 1945 on, Communist leaderships, handcuffed or misled by Kremlin diplomacy, have been responsible for many setbacks and disasters. These have stretched from the compromise of the Indochinese Communists with the French imperialists in 1945 to political subservience to such representatives of the "progressive" bourgeoisie as Nehru in India, Kassim in Iraq, Goulart in Brazil, and Sukarno in Indonesia. The terrible reverses of the colonial freedom struggle, culminating in the Indonesian butchery of 1965, owing to such false leadership, provide powerful evidence that the need for new and better leadership is as urgent in the "Third World" as elsewhere.

The conquest of power by the Communist parties of Yugoslavia, China, North Korea, and North Vietnam has induced not a few radicals and ex-Trotskyists to assume or assert that Lenin's teachings on the party, and Trotsky's reaffirmation of them, are out of date. These developments prove, they argue, that it is a waste of time, a useless undertaking, to try to build independent revolutionary parties of the Leninist type as Trotsky advised, since the exploiters can be overthrown with other kinds of parties, especially if these are supported by a powerful workers' state like the Soviet Union or China.

What substance do these arguments have? It should first be observed that Trotsky himself foresaw and allowed for such a possibility. In the "Transitional Program" he wrote: ". . . one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie."

In the postwar years these exceptional conditions in the more backward countries have been the prostration and collapse of the most corrupt colonial bourgeoisies, the weaknesses of the old imperialist powers in Europe and of Japan, and the mighty upsurge of the indigenous peasant and proletarian masses. Certain Communist leaderships were confronted with the alternatives of being crushed by reaction, outflanked by the revolutionary forces, or taking command of the national liberation and anticapitalist struggles. After some hesitation and vacillation, and against the Kremlin's advice, the Communist leaders in Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam took the latter course and led the proletariat and peasantry to power.

In its resolution on "The Dynamics of World Revolution

Today," adopted at the 1963 Reunification Congress, the Fourth International has taken into account this variant of political development as follows: "The weakness of the enemy in the backward countries has opened the possibility of coming to power with a blunted instrument."

However, this factual observation does not dispose of the entire question, or even touch its most important aspects. The deformations of the regimes emanating from the revolutionary movements headed by the Stalinized parties, and the opportunism and sectarianism exhibited by their leaderships since assuming power, notably in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China, demonstrate that the need for organizing genuine Marxist parties is not ended with the overthrow of capitalist domination. The building of such political formations can become equally urgent as the result of the bureaucratic degeneration and deformation of postcapitalist states in an environment where imperialism remains predominant and backwardness prevails.

This was first recognized in the case of the Soviet Union by Trotsky in 1933. That political conclusion retains full validity for all those workers' states governed by parties that fail to uphold or foster a democratic internal regime or pursue an international revolutionary line. The experience of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings of 1956, and restriction of the de-Stalinization processes in the Soviet Union, alike demonstrate the need for an independent Marxist-Leninist party to lead the antibureaucratic revolution to the end.

The keynote of the reunification document is that "the building of new mass revolutionary parties remains the central strategic task" in all three sectors of the international struggle for socialism: the workers' states, the colonial regions, and above all in the advanced capitalisms.

If Yugoslavia and China are cited to show that any party will do in a pinch, the example of Cuba is often brought forward as proof that no party at all is required in the struggle for power, or that any kind of improvised political outfit will do the job. First of all, this involves a misconstruction of the political history of the Cuban Revolution. The July 26 Movement had a small, close-knit nucleus of leaders, subjected to military discipline by the imperatives of armed combat. They had to construct a broader leadership in the heat of civil war against Batista. Once the Cuban freedom fighters had become sovereign in the country, they found not only that they could not dispense with a vanguard party, but that they desperately needed one. They have therefore proceeded to construct one

along Marxist lines and are still engaged in that task nine years after their victory.

Wouldn't their difficulties have been lessened before and after the taking of power if they had been able to enter the revolution with a more powerful cadre and party? But the default of the Cuban Stalinists foreclosed that more favorable possibility. Moreover, it should be recognized that, since the Cuban experience, both the imperialists and their native satellites under Washington's direction are much more alerted and prompt to take repressive measures to nip rebellion in the bud.

The circumstances of the struggle for power in the highly industrialized countries are vastly different from those in colonial lands, where the native upper classes are feeble, isolated, and discredited, and where the impetus of the unsolved tasks of the democratic revolution reinforces the claims of the wage workers. It would be foolish and fatal to hold that the workers in the imperialist strongholds will be able to get rid of capitalism under the direction of the bureaucratized, corrupt, and ossified Social Democratic or Communist parties, or any centrist shadow of them. Here the injunction to build revolutionary Marxist parties is absolutely unconditional.

The difficulties encountered by the Trotskyist vanguard over the past three decades show that there are no easy or simple recipes for solving the multiple problems posed by this necessity. The major obstacle to building alternative leaderships in most of these countries is the presence of powerful and wealthy Labor, Social Democratic, or Communist organizations which exercise bureaucratic control over the labor movement, but for traditional reasons continue to exact a certain loyalty from the workers. Under such conditions it is often advisable for the original corps of revolutionary Marxists to enter and work for extended periods within such mass parties.

It should never for a moment be forgotten that the prime objective of such a tactical entry is the creation, consolidation, and expansion of the initial cadres and the growth of ties with the most advanced elements. It is not an end in itself. The immediate aim is to transform a propaganda group into a force capable of influencing, organizing, and directing broad masses in action. The ultimate goal is to create a new mass party of the working class along this road.

Experience has shown that there are many pitfalls in implementing an entrust tactic. As a result of prolonged immersion in reformist work and overadaptation to a centrist environment, the fiber of the revolutionary cadre may become corroded and

its perspectives dimmed and even lost. Total immersion in such a milieu has many liabilities and dangers. It is therefore essential that entrism work be complemented by a sector of open public work through which the full program and policies of the Fourth International can at all times be made accessible to the advanced workers.

It is also possible (We have seen such cases!) for entrism to be conducted in an impatient and inflexible way. Then, when adequate results are not quickly forthcoming, the group can prematurely revert to an independent organizational status. If persisted in, such a sectarian course can, under cover of a false ultraleft rhetoric, lead to self-isolation and impotence. It can help the reformist and Communist bureaucrats by leaving them in uncontested command of the situation and narrowing the channels of contact and communication between the revolutionary Marxists and the best militants in the traditional parties.

Both through independent or entrism activities, as the given situation warranted, the American Trotskyists have been busy building a revolutionary Marxist party in the United States ever since they discarded the prospect of reforming the Communist Party in 1933. The Socialist Workers Party regards itself as the legitimate inheritor of the finest traditions of the Socialist movement of Debs, the Socialist Labor Party of De Leon, the IWW of St. John and Haywood, and the early Communist Party. It has drawn upon and benefited from the good and bad experiences of these pioneer attempts to create the party needed by the American workers to lead their revolution.

The history of American communism since its inception in 1919 has been a record of struggle for the right kind of party. All the other problems have been related to this central issue.

Everything that has been done since October 1917 for the advancement of socialism in this citadel of world capitalism and counterrevolution has been governed by this necessity of building the vanguard party, and whatever will be accomplished in the future will, in my opinion, revolve around it. The key to the victory of socialism in the United States will be the fusion of American power, above all the potential power of its working class, with Russian ideas, first and foremost the organizational principles of Lenin's Bolshevism.

The Leninist party proved indispensable in Russia, where the belated bourgeoisie was a feeble social and political force. It will be a million times more necessary in America, the home of the strongest, richest, and most ruthless exploiting class. The Bolshevik conception of the party and its leadership originated

and was first put to the test in the weakest and most backward of capitalist countries. I venture to predict that it will become naturalized and find its fullest application in the struggle for socialism in the most developed country of capitalism.

The revolutionists here confront the most highly organized concentration of economic, political, military, and cultural power in history. These mighty forces of reaction cannot and will not be overthrown without a movement of the popular masses, black and white, which has a centralized, disciplined, principled, experienced Marxist leadership at its head.

It is impossible to stumble into a successful revolution in the United States. It will have to be organized and directed by people and a party that have at their command all the theory, knowledge, resources, and lessons accumulated by the world working class. Its know-how and organization in politics and action must match and surpass that of its enemies.

Those who claim that a Leninist party is irrelevant or unneeded in the advanced capitalisms are 100 per cent wrong. On the contrary, such a party is an absolutely essential condition and instrument for the promotion and triumph of the socialist revolution in the United States, the paragon of world capitalism. Just as the overturn inaugurated by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 was the first giant step in the world socialist revolution and renovation, so the Leninist theory of the party, first vindicated by that event, will find its ultimate verification in the overthrow of imperialism in its central fortress and the establishment of a socialist regime with full democracy on American soil.

Nothing less than the fate of humanity hinges upon the speediest solution of the drawn-out crisis of proletarian leadership. This will have to be done under the banner and through the program of the parties of the Fourth International. The very physical existence of our species depends upon the prompt fulfillment of this supreme obligation. No greater task was ever shouldered by revolutionists of the Marxist school—and not too much time will be given by the monopolists and militarists at bay to carry it through.

On this fiftieth anniversary of the imperishable October Revolution, which has shaped and changed all our lives, our motto is: "To work with more energy toward that goal and win it for the good of mankind."

THE INTELLIGENT REVOLUTIONARY'S

GUIDE TO MARXISM,

IN A HUNDRED VOLUMES

I. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AND GENERAL PROBLEMS OF METHOD

Karl Marx, *Introduction to Critique of Political Economy* and Preface to the *Grundrisse* (*Selected Works*, 2 vols.).

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*.
Nikolai Bukharin and Evgenii Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*.

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Engels, *On Historical Materialism* (Letters, etc.)

V. I. Lenin, *Marx, Engels, Marxism*.

G. V. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*.

Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life*.

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Paul Lafargue, *The Right to Be Lazy*.

Bukharin, *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology*.

Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*.

Karl Kautsky, *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*.

Leon Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours*.

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 Novack, *The Origins of Materialism*.
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IV. APPLICATION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM TO SPECIFIC HISTORIC PROBLEMS

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